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Press, John A Girl with Beehive Hair
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Wells, John Ambion Hill
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Politics

Alternative Defence Commission The Politics of
Alternative Defence: A policy for a non-nuclear
Britain
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McKay, David Politics and Power in the U.S.A.
Penguin. 240pp. £3.95/Can\$9.95 (paperback).
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Miller, Charles Lobbying Government: Understanding
and influencing the corridors of power
Oxford. Blackwell. 263pp. £25. 0 631 15525 2. 2/2/87.

Morgan, Kenneth O. Labour People: Leader and
Lies
Oxford UP. 370pp. £12.95. 0 19 822929 1. 9/4/87.

O'Halloran, Clare Partition and the Limits of Irish
Nationalism: An ideology under stress
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£9.95 (paperback). 0 7171 1472 4 (hc), 0 7171 1512 7 (pb).
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Smith, Dan, and E. P. Thompson, editors Prospectus
for a Habitable Planet (Penguin Special)
Penguin. 240pp. £3.95/Can\$9.95 (paperback).
0 14 052382 0. 2/2/87.

Psychology and medicine

Changaux, Jean-Pierre, translated by Laurence Garey
Neuronal Man: The biology of mind (1st pub. in US
1985)
Oxford UP. 348pp. £17.50 (hardcover). £5.95
(paperback). 0 19 217750 8 (hc), 0 19 504226 3 (pb).
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Geach, Norman, and Albert M. Galaburda
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Van Straten, Michael Body Talk: Help yourself to
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Reference books

Ferguson, Rosalind Choose Your Baby's Name: A
dictionary of first names (Market House Books)
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Prytherch, Ray, editor Harrod's Librarians' Glossary
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Aldershot: Gower. 855pp. £45. 0 566 03538 3. 12/3/87.

Religion

Bentley, James A Calendar of Saints: The lives of the
principal saints of the Christian year
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Evans, G. R. Doing Theology Together: Inside an
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Ingles, Tom Moral Monopoly: The Catholic church in
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Shillingsburg, Peter L. Scholarly Editing in the
Computer Age: Theory and practice
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Worsley, Peter, editor The New "Introducing
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Sport, games and hobbies

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Gautier, Théophile, edited and translated by Inez
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Grant, Barry Keith, editor Film Genre Reader
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Travel

Baillie, Kate, and Tim Salmon The Rough Guide to
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Somerville-Large, Peter To the Navel of the World
Yaks and unheroic travels in Nepal and Tibet
Hamish Hamilton. 225pp. £12.95. 0 241 12108 6. 3/3/87.

Stone, Roger D. Dreams of Amazonia (Penguin Travel
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Cover picture
A detail from Hendrick Goltzius's pen and ink drawing, 'Head of Mercury'. It is reproduced from *The Age of Bridges: Netherlandish drawing in the sixteenth century* by John Oliver Hand, J. Richard Judson, William W. Robinson and Martha Wolff (399pp, £40, 0 521 34196 5), to be published later this year by Cambridge University Press.

Decline and divergence

Robert B. Reich

WILLIAM ROGER LOUIS and HEDLEY BULL
(Editors)
The Special Relationship: Anglo-American relations since 1945
480pp, Oxford University Press, £35.
0 19 82552 9

On March 5, 1946, Winston Churchill, speaking before a group of farmers and local businessmen in Fulton, Missouri, referred to the "special relationship" between the United States and Great Britain - a relationship that he believed would continue to lead the world in the post-war era. Accepting without question Britain's continued status as a world power, Churchill regarded the alliance as one between equals; any shortfall in Britain's economic power would be compensated by her political skills and historic wisdom. He elaborated upon his theme in his six volumes of war memoirs, in which he depicted the war-time alliance as the natural consequence of an underlying cultural unity between the two great English-speaking peoples. Every subsequent British Prime Minister has expressed similar sentiments, alluding to "our joint aims", "our common heritage", or some such expression of Anglo-American solidarity. Eden likened the relationship to that between Austria and Britain after 1815. Macmillan invoked more classical precedent: "We ... are Greeks in this American empire. You will find the Americans much as the Greeks found the Romans - great big, vulgar, bustling people, more vigorous than we are and also more idle, with more unspoiled virtues but also more corrupt." The relationship has been embodied in close personal ties between several pairs of Prime Ministers and Presidents - Churchill and Roosevelt, Eden and Eisenhower, Macmillan and Kennedy, and indeed the present incumbents. But what, after all, has been the practical

significance of the special relationship since the Second World War? Stripped of its sentimental and romantic appeal, what is left? And what is its likely future? These questions are addressed in this excellent volume by twenty British and American experts in modern politics, military affairs and economics. After scrutinizing the "special relationship" through the lenses of post-war history and national interest, the experts are sceptical. In his introduction, David Watt concludes: "The truth of the matter is that since the 1970s Anglo-American relations, considered entirely by themselves, have ceased to be very important or very interesting ... [T]he great question for the future has nothing to do with special relationships. It is how far European and American interests are going to diverge, and if so how to manage this divergence."

Indeed, the idea of a "special relationship" was from the start more a hope for the future than a historical description, and the hope was largely on Britain's side: that America would accept and underwrite Britain's status as a co-equal world power in an era in which her actual power was waning. The idea never had the same appeal in America. Before the war-time alliance, most Americans had regarded Britain as a quaint, or even occasionally menacing, imperial power. For more than a century, the deepest instinct of the United States in foreign affairs had been to isolate herself from Europe. America heeded George Washington's warning to avoid entanglements with Europe's monarchical powers, and then proceeded for more than a century to conquer, purchase, or otherwise control vast territories to the west and south. Americans remembered, too, that Britain had been the enemy of the United States in two wars; and the Irish who flooded into America in the mid and late nineteenth century did little to soften this hostile view.

From America's side, the "special relationship" since the war has been founded in mutual defence against the Soviet Union. The war-time alliance merely shifted focus from

one common enemy to another. As Bradford Perkins points out in his chapter on the Truman Administration and Great Britain, British leaders early on accepted, even urged, a united front against Soviet aggression. Ernest Bevin saw the Soviet menace as a central challenge to the alliance. George Kennan's famous "long telegram" of February 1946, which first defined for Americans the Soviet threat to the United States, had its counterpart in similar messages from Frank Roberts, Minister in the British Embassy in Moscow, with whom Kennan often collaborated. In this emerging Anglo-American cold-war view, our common security, and that of the free world, was menaced not only by the Soviet military but also by the political and psychological lure of Soviet communism.

The Soviet Union's first atomic explosion in the autumn of 1949 hastened the process by which the post-war relationship was transformed into a true military alliance supported by massive force. The core of the special relationship thereafter took the form of efforts to contain Soviet aggression - through joint leadership of Nato, co-ordinated action in the United Nations Security Council, the sharing of national and military intelligence, Britain's willingness to devote a high proportion of her national product to military purposes, and her willingness to allow the United States to base its jet fighters on British soil and nuclear submarines in British ports. Although the United States rarely treated Britain as an equal partner in making strategic decisions, American officials nevertheless consulted closely with their British counterparts during these early post-war years, and Britain was responsible for suggesting many of the initiatives that marked Nato's response to the Russians. Britain's enthusiastic anti-Sovietism continued through the decades. Even as late as 1979, as Ernest May and Gregory Trevett suggest in their chapter on the defence relationship, the Nato decision to deploy 572 American cruise and Pershing 2 nuclear missiles in Europe was

prompted by a letter from the British Defence Minister, Fred Mulley, to his American counterpart, Harold Brown.

Britain's enthusiastic co-operation in containing the Russians was reciprocated by America's willingness to trust Britain with nuclear weapons, and to subsidize their cost. In 1958, Britain became the only American ally (to the lasting distress of President de Gaulle) to receive technical information on the production of nuclear warheads and fissile material. Subsequently, the United States allowed Britain to buy the Polaris submarine, and then, in 1980, the Trident. No other ally was given access to these advanced nuclear systems. As Alistair Horne shows in his chapter on the Macmillan years, Britain probably could not have procured as credible a nuclear deterrent at a lower cost. Today, what Britain calls her independent nuclear deterrent is still dependent on the provision of missiles from the United States.

As the authors make clear, however, this military and strategic relationship took root precisely as Britain's economic and political power in the world went into sharp decline. The decline would, over time, both enhance Britain's dependence on the United States and reduce America's interest in Britain. Both consequences would be unfortunate. As the "special relationship" became increasingly one-sided, Britain became ever more fearful of either becoming a pawn of, or, alternatively, being abandoned by, the United States. As America began losing interest in her foremost ally, American policy-makers grew less sensitive to the needs and desires of all her allies. The first of these two consequences is closely examined in *The Special Relationship: Anglo-American relations since 1945*; the second is only hinted at.

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influence around the world, it had had a very different effect upon Britain. Britain sacrificed a quarter of her national wealth to the war and, ultimately, her economic hegemony over a significant part of the globe. The trend would not be apparent for a decade or more. In 1950, Britain's Gross National Product had just ceased to equal that of France and West Germany combined. As late as 1959, though far behind the United States, Britain still possessed the second-largest GNP in the world. But by 1970 Britain had been overtaken by West Germany and was easily matched by France. By 1985, Britain's GNP per capita was less than that of Italy.

Given how far Britain has fallen, it is easy to forget the extraordinary degree of economic power she exercised on the eve of the war. In 1939, the British Empire and the United States together accounted for about 60 per cent of the world's industrial production and controlled roughly three-quarters of the globe's military wealth. At the war's end, the two were the only industrial economies still largely intact. It was natural that Britain and America would now take joint responsibility for redesigning the world economy - developing a system of fixed exchange rates to minimize currency fluctuations, an International Monetary Fund to ensure liquidity, a World Bank to aggregate and direct development finance, a General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to ensure an open trading system. And it was by dint of their joint commitment to this system that it worked well for a quarter of a century: as Richard Gardner shows in his chapter on sterling-dollar diplomacy, the years 1945 to 1970 witnessed the most dramatic and widely-shared economic growth in the history of mankind. World GNP grew from \$300 billion to about \$2,000 billion, world trade from \$30 billion to over \$300 billion. Even allowing for inflation, real incomes tripled, world trade quadrupled.

During these decades, Britain relinquished hegemony over much of southern Asia, the Middle East and Africa. The buoyant world economy rendered the transition from colonialism to independence somewhat easier for these nascent countries than it might otherwise have been. Indeed, the beneficent cycle of world trade and economic growth that characterized these years may itself have reduced their dependence on Britain and further emboldened national elites to demand an end to British rule.

It was and is tempting to view the demise of

the British Empire as another manifestation of America's cold-war strategy, and several of the contributors to this volume place it within that context. Indeed, Macmillan himself largely accepted the American view that, in his words, "the great issue in this second half of the twentieth century" was "whether the uncommitted peoples of Asia and Africa would swing to the East or to the West", and that the only hope for forestalling Soviet influence lay in accepting the force of local nationalism and seeking to combine it with a respect for equality and economic reform. American impatience with the speed at which Britain acted on this principle sometimes created tensions within the special relationship. On at least one occasion - in the Suez crisis - it led to a complete breakdown.

William Roger Louis in this volume quotes John Foster Dulles, the American cold-warrior Secretary of State, at an exasperating but revealing moment when the Russians were contending with a restive Hungary, and Britain and France were simultaneously confronting a restive Egypt: "It is no less than tragic that at this very time, when we are on the point of winning an immense and long-hoped-for victory over Soviet colonialism in Eastern Europe, we should be forced to choose between following in the footsteps of Anglo-French colonialism in Asia and Africa, or splitting our course away from their course." Dulles's impatience was perhaps understandable. But in retrospect it seems doubtful that the pace of Third World nationalism could have been substantially accelerated or retarded by either America or Britain. To attribute the timing of Britain's withdrawal in Asia and Africa to Anglo-American debate over the Soviet menace in the Third World substantially overestimates the capacities of all three world powers to dictate political outcomes in these regions of the globe.

Max Beloff, in one of the book's more provocative and pointed chapters, concedes that Britain's loss of hegemony was inevitable, but he faults the United States for having failed to take Britain's imperial place. Beloff argues that the difference between the United States and the older imperial powers like Britain lay in the fact that "while they had conscious or unconscious philosophies which to their ruling elites, and at times to wider strata of society, seemed to justify their status and role... the United States is clearly still reluctant to accept its imperial role as anything but an expedient resorted to in self-defence." Lord Beloff's criticism rests on the assumption that America, had it wished, could have asserted the same degree of hegemony over the Third World in the post-war era as Britain had exercised before the war. In this argument we see the same tendency to overestimate the political capacities of the First World and underestimate the nationalistic forces in the Third.

The global political and economic system has evolved beyond the point at which a single nation can exercise imperial hegemony. In one respect, however, Beloff's criticism of the United States is well placed. Since 1970, America has seemed less the leader of the free world than a frustrated actor seeking to impose its will upon it, for its own selfish purposes - seeking to exercise imperial authority, as it were, but unwilling to accept the responsibility that goes with it. America's military, political and economic policies have often seemed calculated to improve or at least maintain America's position at the expense of her allies. It is in this respect that the gradual undoing of the "special relationship" has had, in my view, the most unfortunate of consequences, both for the United States and for the world.

Few nations in history have combined such raw military and economic muscle with so parochial a view of the rest of the globe as does modern America. The vast majority of the citizens of the United States speak no foreign language, encounter few foreigners in their daily lives, read little or nothing about happenings beyond their borders. This attitude of benign neglect of the rest of mankind is a luxury that only a large, naturally wealthy and geographically isolated nation could have maintained for any length of time. Before the Second World War its consequences for the rest of the world were relatively harmless. Since then, however, American ethnocentrism has caused no small problems. The greatest impediment to America's effective lead-

ership of the free world has been her limited ability to understand and collaborate with the rest of the free world.

It is precisely here that the "special relationship" with Britain played such an important role in the quarter-century after the war. In Britain the United States found another nation whose citizens spoke the same language, who shared similar legal and political institutions, not to mention many of the same ancestors, but who, by virtue of geography and history, possessed a different and perhaps broader vision of the world. Here was a people whom Americans could trust: friends and confidants in an unfriendly and confusing world, who provided another perspective, and thus helped America overcome its chronic tendency towards parochialism. Although the evidence is scattered and anecdotal, there is little doubt that during this era American officials often sought the counsel of their British counterparts, and obtained the sort of frank and confidential advice that one can get only from an old and trusted friend whose judgment is deeply valued. To be sure, the two allies at times reinforced each other's delusions. But Britain's advice often comprised a different viewpoint, causing Americans to think again, and to refine or abort a course of action that might not have been adequately thought through.

In this respect America has needed Britain as much as, if not more than, Britain has needed America. But there is an ironic cycle to this relationship. As Britain's economic and political power has waned, each subsequent American administration has come to view Britain more as one among several constituents whose assent is sometimes necessary or useful to legitimize a policy, or who must be mollified and cajoled into accepting a particular American initiative, and less as a special source of wisdom and counsel. (American culture has long tended to discount advice coming from the impecunious: as the Yankee homily goes, "If you're so smart, why ain't you rich?") The generation of experts and bureaucrats who now populate the higher reaches of the White House, the National Security Council, the State Department, the Treasury, and the Defense Department have no direct experience and little memory of the "special relationship" in its golden days. To them, increasingly, Britain is just another pestering voice.

This gradual transformation from a special to a not-so-special relationship has in turn loosened the subtle constraints on American foreign policy, rendering it less sensitive to the needs and views of all of America's allies, with the result that the policies that have issued from Washington in more recent years have too often been unilateral, peremptory and wide of the mark. And as American policy has appeared in Britain to diverge ever more from a judicious and responsible path, and American officials seem ever less inclined to consult seriously and in advance with their British counterparts, Britain has understandably begun to withdraw from the relationship, to distance herself from America.

It is this vicious circle, rather than America's failure to take on the modern mantle of British imperialism, as Lord Beloff suggests, or the rise of a more virulent and politically potent anti-Americanism in the British Labour Party, that explains many of the new tensions within the alliance. There have always been currents of anti-Americanism in Britain. The 'British left has long been hostile to capitalism, wanting to believe that most international conflicts have been prompted more by capitalist injustice than by communist aggression, and that the Russians have been driven more by defensive compulsions than expansionist ambitions. Such views informed the Keep Left group, led by Michael Foot and Richard Crossman, which attacked Bevin's "excessive subservience" to the United States in the 1940s; forty years later they underlay the Labour Party's defence policy paper of August, 1984.

The new and more popular form of anti-Americanism in Britain, as in the rest of Western Europe, is, I believe, attributable to what appears to be America's growing indifference to her allies and to the effects of her policies on world politics and economics. Sadly, examples abound: the post-war status of international economic institutions set up by America and Britain is now coming apart, and United States

economic policies are largely to blame. America refuses to tame her yawning budget deficit, which has undermined the stability of world currencies; she continues to contrive "voluntary restraint agreements" and "voluntary marketing agreements" with trading partners, with the result that world markets for automobiles, consumer electronics and other goods are rapidly becoming cartelized; and she is unrelenting in imposing harsh conditions on the repayment of the Latin American debt by American banks, thus drying up these potential markets while destabilizing their own democracies.

American defence policy reveals a similar insensitivity. The current administration is a complete lack of interest in negotiating reductions in either strategic or intermediate-range nuclear weapons, and then, as at the Reykjavik summit meeting, sudden - and shocking - willingness to eliminate offensive ballistic missiles altogether. Last November, the United States intentionally violated the Salt 2 limit. The Strategic Defense Initiative, which is likely to escalate the arms race into space, is also likely to be deployed sooner rather than later, thus effectively terminating the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. In the Third World, Americans seem to have adopted a strategy of supporting communist rebels wherever they arise - looking Nicaragua and Angola. And how has America chosen to lead the free world against terrorism? While the White House solemnly instructed American allies not to bargain with terrorists, Reagan sent arms to Tehran for the release of American hostages in Lebanon.

Ironically, the age-old American ideal of a pristine nation, separate from the rest of the world, which can either assert its will unilaterally upon the world or withdraw from it, has less relevance to the situation in which America finds itself today than at any time in the past. American unilateralism has become a self-defeating policy, a series of reactions that have come back to where they began. When America has stimulated her economy while other nations opt for restraint, she has summoned a flood of imports and risked inflation and unemployment. When she has unilaterally raised interest rates, she has ravaged debtor nations and invited a global recession. When she has closed her borders to foreign goods, she has crippled her debtors' efforts to pay back their loans. When she has developed dramatically new and more elaborate defensive systems, she has discovered that the Russians will do whatever necessary to eliminate any American strategic advantage. When she has lent support to any dictator or revolutionary distasteful to the Russians, she has lost whatever moral advantage she possessed in the Third World. Faced with these awkward realities there has been a temptation in America to lash out - to be ever more assertive towards the rest of the world. American politicians increasingly describe international relations as a series of tests of America's "credibility", "determination" or "resolve". The assumption is that either we win or they win.

Britain's shift towards Europe, away from the "special relationship" with America, is understandable in this new context. So, too, are the doubts being expressed in Europe these days about the reliability of America's nuclear umbrella. As the German Christian Democratic leader Kurt Biedenkopf recently declared, "The basic assumption of NATO has come into doubt: that the US is still willing to risk having a nuclear exchange with the Soviets that could mean trading the destruction of Chicago to save Bonn."

Should the Labour Party return to power in Britain, and act on its current policy of doing away with Britain's own nuclear force and removing all American nuclear weapons and bases from British territory and waters, the vicious circle will be complete. For, as this book makes clear, it was in the realm of nuclear weapons that the post-war "special relationship" was in many respects at its most distinctive. But such a change will be only the latest manifestation of the deeper problem. As Britain moves away from America in response to America's having moved away from Britain and her allies, she will be leaving America more alone than she has been at any time over the last half-century. It is a solitude which is at once poignant and dangerous.

Sailing steadily on

John Turner

ROY JENKINS
Baldwin
200pp. Collins. £12.95.
00021596X

It is a remarkable fact that most Conservative Prime Ministers seem to become more agreeable and more admirable as they retreat into the past. To the immoderate this means that the only good Tory PM is a dead one, but very different ones can also be a lot of fun, as Lord Asquith so amply demonstrated before his recent death; and Mr Heath has already begun to mellow in the public estimation. This is not, as some would argue, simply because the Tory party itself has become nastier, and a party leader who tried to represent his followers will seem more acceptable to later generations than the contemporary leader with whom they are comparing him. The better explanation is that historical perspective makes it easier to see the difficulties under which these devoted public



servants laboured. Only Churchill and Eden seem destined for a permanent loss of reputation compared with their stature as working premiers, while revisionists will even argue that Neville Chamberlain was less than absolutely in the wrong.

And thus it is with Stanley Baldwin. The apotheosis of inter-war complacency, the man whose claim to have invented fudge and mudge is much stronger than that of any member of the Callaghan administration, has grown steadily in stature since his death. His "neatly shaped yet most unusual career", as Roy Jenkins has it, has become a source of inspiration to conservatives of all parties who admire his ability to keep the ship of state sailing steadily on course, without much regard to the condition of the sea, the proximity of rocks and pirates, mutiny in the stokehold or scurry in the fo'c'sle.

Baldwin succeeded his father as MP for Bewdley in 1908. At the hands of Lloyd George he became Financial Secretary to the Treasury in July 1917 and President of the Board of Trade in July 1921. In October 1922 he did more than any other Cabinet minister to overthrow Lloyd George's Coalition, and succeeded to the Exchequer in Bonar Law's government. In an administration not well endowed with political talent he defeated "dear George" Curzon to succeed Bonar Law in the premiership in May 1923. The rest of his political career was devoted to keeping out "the Goat" and discouraging any recrudescence at the centre of British politics of the "dynamic force" which in his view so discredited the Coalition. The two comparatively recent efforts at a serious biography, by Keith Middlemas and John Barnes in 1969 and Montgomery Hyde in 1973, have established the portrait of a man whose best claims to pre-eminence are his emollient towards potential opposition (involving Labour and the working class), and his sustained success as a party leader against the attacks of colleagues who seemed to think that it was the job of a leader to lead his Minister to a humiliating defeat.

structive about the problems facing his party and his country. He has been compared to Salisbury as one of the Conservative leaders who really understood the genius of English conservatism: a refined mixture of hypocrisy and inanity. Jenkins has now turned in an essay of appreciation, "written from a non-Conservative although not personally unsympathetic standpoint".

This is less a work of scholarship than an exposition of known fact, and less a factual account than a piece of entertainment. Jenkins is now the only senior active politician who can write decently at book length without ghosts and research assistants. Though he lacks the venom of Michael Foot, who is the better essayist, he can sustain an argument for longer and he has a greater command of the cadences of the English language. The book is written for the informed and humanely educated general reader with strong political interests, a person who may no longer exist. There is nothing new in it, because no new sources have been consulted: indeed it is one of those many books which could easily have been written without moving from the library of the Athenaeum. It is only 166 pages long, the balance being made up in potted biographies which are themselves amusingly written and sometimes acute.

The mystery in the book is to discover what Jenkins intends to convey as his own stand-point. The Baldwin of this book is the same old procrastinator, occasionally turning prevaricator, who inhabits the thousand pages of Middlemas and Barnes. It is hard to believe that Jenkins is sympathetic to this figure in the same way as he was sympathetic to Asquith, of whom he has written a much more solid and scholarly biography. Asquith shared many of Baldwin's worst features, but Asquith's career included long stretches of political and administrative competence marked by considerable intellectual acuity. Appreciative Tory opponents noted that Asquith, even when "exhilarated", was more than a match for most of his colleagues and most of their own leaders. But Baldwin sober was manifestly less effective than either Lord Birkenhead or Winston Churchill in their customary euphoria, or Lloyd George at any time. Even Ramsay MacDonald could make him look slow and dowdy, at least in the 1920s. His ministerial career before the premiership was marked by dullness and a particularly crass handling of the War Debt problem. His greatest triumph as a party leader was to beat off the challenge of Empire Free Trade, but a battle between Beaverbrook and almost any former Prime Minister was hardly a contest on equal terms.

The surprise about Baldwin is his capacity to survive, steadily forging a reputation as the Lord Liverpool of our time, presiding over a Cabinet of mediocrities. Roy Jenkins's agreeable essay will contribute something to the survival of Baldwin's reputation, without doing much to explain it.

In *Parliaments and Parliamentarians in Democratic Politics* (255pp. New York: Holmes and Meier. \$37.50; paperback, \$19.95. 0 8419 0942 3) the editor, Ezra N. Suleiman (Professor of Politics at Princeton University) and an international group of political scientists examine the labyrinthine realities of the political process in seven democratic countries - Great Britain, Italy, France, Japan, West Germany, Norway and the United States. On the assumption that the "classical" model of democracy - according to which the nation's elected representatives constitute the centre of the decision-making and legislative process - no longer works, the contributors focus on the growing accountability of elected officials to their political parties, the efforts to assess the changing role of parliament and parliamentarians within the political context in general, and within the party context in particular. Richard Rose writes on "British in particular". Giuseppe Di Maria, More Bark than Bite?; Giuseppe Di Maria and Maurizio Cotta explore the theme of "Cadres, Peasants, and Entrepreneurs: Professional Identities in a Divided Parliament"; Suleiman contributes a chapter on parliament and parliamentarians in Japan; Klaus von Beyme looks at the role of deputies in West Germany; Per Laegreid and Johan P. Olsen analyse the Norwegian Storting and Thomas E. Mann discusses the United States Congress. The book is a valuable contribution to the study of democratic politics.

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I have brought my father things to read, *Pix*, *Post*, *People*, and I tell him how *magazine*

is like the word for shop in French. I have just started high school, I am learning a language.

My father lifts his striped pyjama top so I can see what looks like the map of Africa

where the doctor has traced the shape of his liver for the third-year students.

At the end of the ward men are listening to the races and from the next-door bed

the man with one leg, the bloke my father says might have to lose the other,

leans across to tell my father something about the second leg at Trentham.

BILL MANHIRE

Path of inner torment

Ernest Gellner

HEATHER STODDARD
Le Mendiant de l'Ando
395pp. Paris: Société d'Ethnographie. Fr240.
2 901 161286

The marchlands between the Marxist empires of Russia and China include lands which share a strong leaning towards monastic Buddhism, a partly pastoral economy, a marked cultural distinctiveness and, notwithstanding their small numbers, a great history. The Mongols, now divided between Russian and Chinese domination, had in the past conquered both their present masters. The Manchus too conquered China, and made Buddhism an official religion. The Tibetans did not conquer, but they maintained a Buddhist theocracy till the middle of the present century. Heather Stoddard estimates that during the two millennia separating the Han period from the end of the Empire, the Dragon throne was for about half the time in the hands of barbarians drawn from these regions. But in the modern world the balance of power has tilted against them, and they in turn have fallen either to the Chinese or to the Russians.

In the old days, the cohesion of pastoralists compensated for their relatively small numbers. It does so no longer: the deeply Buddhist marchlands now submit to the successor ideologies. It happened to the Mongols in the 1920s, and to the Tibetans in the 1950s. But while the two empires were undergoing the convulsions which in due course turned them Marxist, the Buddhist "barbarians" could and did dream of recovering or maintaining their independence, and even of re-uniting with their brethren already within the imperial embrace. It was not to be. When the empires recovered their unity the barbarians were parcelled up, and their heartlands devoured. Their monastic Buddhism was dismantled in the name of Marxist secularism.

The turbulent story, political, military and intellectual, of the displacement of Buddha by Marx in Mongolia is relatively well known, at least to specialists. A mad Buddhist baron from the Baltic, Baron von Ungern-Sternberg, tried to create a Greater Mongolia, before being finally abandoned by his own troops and executed by the Reds. (One hopes that the new Cambridge Centre for Mongol Studies, which certainly has the necessary scholarly resources for it, will make an account of all this available to a wider public before too long.) But the related, and strangely parallel, development in Tibet has hitherto remained virtually unknown.

Dr Stoddard has reconstructed what it was like to live through the last decades of the *ancien régime* in Tibet, by tracing the career of Gedun Chopel, a wandering scholar, rebel, saint, sinner and martyr. A native of an outlying province absorbed by the Chinese well before they occupied central Tibet, Gedun first penetrated the lamaistic establishment in Lhasa, then entered the world of international Tibetan scholarship, and finally became exposed to the winds of intellectual and political change blowing in India. Many details of his life remain obscure and contentious, but he seems to have been driven by an inner turbulence which, one suspects, made him rather unusual in the Tibetan *gelugpa*, the lamaistic church which dominated his country. This establishment was addicted to what the author calls a "delicious (idol)atry", and was incapable of serious resistance to the forces which were to destroy it.

In 1950, when the Chinese attacked at eight points, the only telegraphist in Lhasa, Ford, was unable to inform any member of the government: all offices were closed for ten days, and the government had departed on a picnic. This comportment was in no way untypical, and a similar passivity, or inclination to flight, was manifested in the face of the other invasions, Chinese or British, which Tibet has experienced in recent times.

Gedun's life-story overlaps with the fascinating figure of Agvan Dorjiev, the Buryat (Siberian forest Mongol) who became the *émigré* of the thirteenth Dalai Lama, and whom the British believed, rightly or wrongly, to be (Sir Nicholas) Pym in Lhasa. His machinations, real or imaginary, contributed to the

British mounting an expedition to Lhasa in 1903; he lived on till 1936. During his own prolonged stay in India in the 1940s, Gedun, revivalist rather than conservative, became involved not merely with Indian nationalists, but also with a noted Russian émigré orientalist, George Nicolas de Roerich, whom he helped to translate Tibetan historical texts, without apparently receiving adequate acknowledgment. Roerich himself volunteered for the Red Army when Hitler attacked Stalin, but he only actually returned to Russia, with his valuable collection of texts, in 1957, when Khrushchev invited him back as a professor of Oriental Languages and Philosophy. He held this post until his death in 1961. But if the author's Tibetan informants are well informed, far from being a Russian agent, Roerich had political sympathies which instead were rather close to those of her own hero. He longed for a federation of the peoples of the High Lands of Asia, which could defy Russians, Chinese and British alike.

Gedun was evidently a scholar, but in the classical nationalist mould: eager to use history to revitalize Tibetan national consciousness. Eventually he became involved with a subversive party, organized by Tibetans in India. The precise degree of radicalism of this party is a contentious matter of interpretation. Its Chinese name claims it to be *revolutionary*, whereas the Tibetan version only aspires, more moderately, to be *progressive*. It is not clear whether Gedun actually joined it, but evi-

dently he was associated with the founder, and he did design its emblem (he was a talented draughtsman). This shows a crossed sickle and sword, and Gedun evidently hoped that a revived Tibet would recover its ancient military glory.

In February 1946, the founder of the party ordered, perhaps rather optimistically, 4,000 application forms and 2,000 membership cards (was it expected that half the applicants would have to be turned down?) from a Calcutta firm of printers rejoicing in the Dickensian name of Thacker and Spink. The printers promptly notified the authorities of this scheme for subversion north of the Himalayas, and the information eventually reached Hugh Richardson, the British representative in Lhasa; possibly through him, it also reached the Tibetan authorities. The contact between lama and Roerich, a Russian no less, albeit a White one, was duly noted. Evidently, those Russians were at it once again. Having failed in their scheming through Dorjiev, they were now trying it on through the beggar-pilgrim of Amdo?

Gedun himself was back in Lhasa by this time. The eventual consequence was his arrest and maltreatment. There appear to have been attempts to exculpate Richardson, who wrote an article rebutting accusations of British involvement, but Stoddard affirms that he played a part. In any case, Gedun was imprisoned, eventually released, and died in obscure circumstances shortly after the arrival of the

Chinese in Lhasa. The author hints at a revivalist figure among the Siberian Buryats, perished in a gulag as late as the 1970s.

According to Richardson, the Tibetan who was by then debilitated by alcohol and opium. He also apparently smoked a good deal, even in prison. Stoddard angrily denies use of an inflatable female doll, a device allegedly introduced into India by the British. Gedun, says Stoddard, had no need of such a surrogate, as he found no difficulty in attracting lady companions on his travels. The liberalism of his culture, though not the monks, was longly tolerated such habits.

The story has almost everything – the interaction of high politics with high theology, farce and human frailty, the end of a *ancien régime* indeed, the illusions and confusions of the harbingers of a new one, and the intrigues which could affect both the boundaries of empires and the tenure of a Chair of Oriental Studies. Gedun is now becoming a cult figure among Tibetans in India, and his image is being retrospectively rehabilitated and humanized with the cultural ideal. Heather Stoddard has assiduously assembled the available documentation, and interviewed those who remember the period, including the present his Lama. She tells this extraordinary story admirably. With painstaking scholarship, she has illuminated the fascinating and, in this case, inwardly tormented path from Buddha to Lhasa.

Uncooked conquerors

Robert Irwin

DAVID MORGAN
The Mongols
238pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £14.95.
0 135356 1

The Mongols makes its appearance, somewhat eccentrically, as the first of a series of volumes on the peoples of Europe. The Mongols tried very hard to become a people of Europe. In the early thirteenth century they got to within striking distance of Vienna, invaded Silesia, minted coins in Hungary and established their hegemony over Muscovy. But although they were terrifyingly successful in other parts of the world, they can only be awarded a *proxime accessit* as members of the medieval European community.

David Morgan's book is the first scholarly survey of Mongol history in the English language since J. J. Saunders' *The History of the Mongol Conquests* (1971). Morgan is well up on current writing in the field, and demonstrates how scholarship has moved on in the last decade and a half. Some advances have been made by bringing new sources into play, others by a more thorough consideration of sources that have long been known. Despite its European preface, one of *The Mongols*'s greatest strengths is the extent to which recent researches on Chinese sources have been taken into account. Chinese perceptions of their Mongol antagonists and, later, Chinese accounts of their Mongol Yuan overlords have in turn been used to shed light on developments elsewhere in the Mongol world empire. In particular our attention is drawn to the Khitans, an obscure people (far too remote and obscure ever to be in the running as a European people), apparently of Mongol origin, who from the tenth century onwards had become accustomed to rule and administration, and who as dynasts and marcher lords in northern China had absorbed much of Chinese administrative practice and culture.

The Chinese were accustomed to classify barbarians (that is, all non-Chinese) into one of two categories – "cooked" and "uncooked", depending on the degree of their exposure to Chinese civilization. By the early thirteenth century, the Khitans had been quite thoroughly cooked, while the more distant Mongols, who grazed their herds in the region of Lake Baikal, remained uncooked. Throughout the early decades of their attempt at world conquest they would stay uncooked; but their employment of the Khitans provided them with a pool of expert administrators to deal with the settled peoples they conquered.



"Akbar mounting his horse", one of sixty-one miniature illustrations the Chester Beatty Akbar Nama, the seventeenth-century Mughal narrative (an earlier version of which is in the Victoria and Albert Museum) of the life of the Mogul emperor. Dating from 1605-7, and attributed to Sir Das Gulerati, the painting is reproduced in Indian Miniature Paintings and Drawings: The Cleveland Museum of Art catalogue of oriental art, Part One, by Linda York Leach (324pp. Indiana University Press. \$65. 0 913986 78 1).

Morgan, who is a historian of medieval Persia, uses what is known of Khitan institutions from the Chinese side to shed considerable light on Mongol administrative practice in Persia. New material is brought into play, including a recently discovered letter addressed by Hülegü, the Mongol Ilkhan of Persia, to Louis IX of France, which suggests, among other things, that the Mongols found it difficult to campaign in Syria for any length of time because of the lack of pasture there. This factor is likely to have been crucial in determining the duration and success of Mongol campaigns elsewhere in Europe and Asia. Other sources, which have long been known, are more closely examined, among them the Secret

History, confusingly so-called, since, unlike the other indigenous history of the Mongols, the *Golden Book*, it was not secret. But our favourite old source of information on the Mongols, the *Yasa*, an alleged code of law promulgated by Chingis Khan and his successors, vanishes altogether under Morgan's scrutiny.

Neither the old nor the new sources, however, really shed sufficient light on the big controversies in Mongol history. First, there is the question of numbers. How numerous were the Mongol armies? Morgan's judgment is doubtful. He doubts that a Mongol army of 800,000 Mongols passed through Khorasan in 1220 since, Mongol logistics being what they were, this implies the concomitant passage of 4 million horses and 24 million sheep and goats. Secondly, how destructive were the Mongols? Some historians have mischievously suggested that reports of millions of deaths and the breakdown of settled society in the Near East have been much exaggerated. Morgan does not think so, though he is inclined to attribute more to the nomads' neglect of irrigation works than to their penchant for fire and the sword. Thirdly, what was the rule of succession in the Mongol imperial family, and how large a part did disputes over the succession and over appanages play in determining the flow and ebb of their empire? All these ponderable questions are handled by the author with wit, style and common sense. Gibbon observed that the Mongol invasions "from their uncommon magnitude will interest a philosophic mind in the history of blood". It is the spirit of Gibbon which pervades *The Mongols*.

One issue that is not controversial, and which gets only a passing mention in Morgan's book, is the status and role of women in Mongol society. But it should be controversial: modern scholarship's neglect of this area is most curious, particularly when one considers the disapproving interest shown in the subject by medieval Christian and Muslim observers of the Mongols. If, as has often been stated, "the Mongol army was the Mongol people on the move", where were the women? Did the troops of the general, Subutai, in their years of campaigning through Russia and Hungary bring with them not only a string of spare horses, but also their wives? If they did not, were the women left behind in the steppe heartlands to run things more or less as they pleased? And if the women did accompany the armies on their epic campaigns, did they fight? There is some sporadic evidence that they did take part in campaigns, but the question certainly deserves further examination. At present we have the history of only half the Mongol people.

A nun of art

Anita Brookner

JOANNA RICHARDSON
Judith Gautier: A biography
310pp. Quartet. £14.95.
0 70432483 0

Judith Gautier was exceedingly famous in her own day and is completely forgotten in ours. She would have been famous, had she not written, for being the daughter of Théophile, the poet *impeccable*, with his Merovingian hairstyle and conquistador's garments. She would have been famous as the offspring of a giant irregular even by modern standards, for her mother, Ernesta Grisi, was Gautier's second choice of partner, since he remained enamoured of Ernesta's sister, Carlotta, with whom he often sought refuge: he married neither of them. Judith would have been more justifiably famous as a great beauty: countless admirers, and even the brothers Goncourt, were to speak of her black eyes, her matte white skin and her Hindu profile. She might even have been famous as one of Victor Hugo's last passions; she would certainly have been famous for her Platonic association with Wagner. But she was most famous of all for her stories, fables of the mythic East, which she wrote with disconcerting fluency and unabashed idealism throughout her life, although she never set foot outside Europe and indeed hardly travelled at all except for visits to Brussels and various German towns, and of course to Trieste and to Wahnfried, to visit Wagner and attend the first nights of his operas.

What made her Orientalism so strange – and on the strength of her stories it is hardly believable – was that she was a scholar: she spoke and wrote Chinese, surrounded herself with Chinese and Japanese artefacts, and was convinced, on the grounds of affinity alone, that she had been born in the wrong country. In later life she wore kimono, corresponded with the Emperor of Annam, and kept a menagerie of snakes, lizards, cats and tortoises in her red lacquer apartment in the rue Washington. She would have been singular even if she had not been famous, but she was also widely read in her own lifetime, and as the Hindu profile survived the ravages of age, and as she was flocked to her door and news of her continued to circulate. She became the first woman member of the jury of the Académie Goncourt, and continued to write, although not to bestir herself as she had once done, until her death in 1901 in the small villa she had had built in Brittany, near Dinard. Her companion at the end was not one of her previously ardent admirers, all of whom had predeceased her, but a gauche young woman of Alsatian background, Suzanne Meyer-Zundel. The two women wrote poetry to each other and were eventually buried in the same grave.

As is the case with most famous beauties of the nineteenth century, it is extremely hard to discern the lineaments of desire in the corpulent bodies and heavy jowled faces that survive in the photographs of the time. Abundant oiled hair, rigid busts hoisted to collar-bone level, confident jawlines and bulldog necks belie the head rested poetically on the hand or the gaze inclined on the middle distance. Gautier, dressed as a gypsy king, perhaps in an effort to disguise his unceasing labour as a journalist, looks grimy and theatrical. Hugo, bristling white beard dimpling to meet his bristling white hair, might be a sea captain (the comparison was made in his lifetime) or the retired inventor of an improved kind of sulphur match rather than the authentic spirit of Romantic passion in love and politics. Catulle Mendès, Judith's disappointing husband, was famed in his day for his seductiveness, his hint of corruption, his *ange déchu* beauty; in the Fernand Desmoulin engraving which Joanna Richardson reproduces, he looks startled and finicky. Only Wagner stands up to physical scrutiny, largely, one suspects, because he remained thin. Judith herself rapidly became moun- tainous and was more or less obliged to wear loose-flowing Oriental garments. Sargent painted her standing beside her piano, in a cream taffeta peignoir; it is possible to see in the slightly thickened features of the face and the noble decorated collar the Japanese and therefore highly fashionable charm of this

woman who exerted such a spell over men of letters, young and old, whatever her own private inclinations might have been, and who survived her early fame with her reputation for goodness intact and even enhanced by her lazy and impassive hospitality, or perhaps simply by the fact that she could, at the end, be compared with no one but her own illustrious father. For she was Gautier's daughter to the last, despite her Oriental imaginings, and she earns her place in literature as a late Parnassian, a fervent publicizer and celebrator of *le goût japonais*, a forerunner of Pierre Loti and Pierre Louys, both of whom she knew when they were young and she was old, and possibly the highest incarnation of that languishing sexless ardour that can also be discerned in Huysmans and Gustave Moreau, and which may be the true decadence.

Yet she herself remained an innocent, at least on paper. When she converted, at the end of her life, into an animal-loving solitary who had renounced human passion, she may not have been entirely honest with her public; there is little evidence to suggest that she had even valued the love of men or that she had even estimated it correctly. Her marriage to Catulle Mendès filled her with disgust, not without justification, for he was famously dis- solute, and managed to father five children by another bulldog-jawed beauty, Augusta Holmes, three of them while he was still married. Judith Gautier may or may not have responded to Hugo, who, at the age of seventy, was still on manoeuvres: their common language is so inflated that it is difficult to tell exactly what was happening. This mystical language is even rather worrying, for it oversteps the bounds of taste at every turn, and it seems that, in her innocence, Judith was the worst offender. She wrote to Wagner, after meeting him at Trieste, for the first time. "It is only him at Trieste for the felicity of Paradise, now that I understand the felicity of Paradise, which is so extolled by the faithful: the joy of seeing God face to face." A young man seen bathing at Fécamp was compared with the Archangel Michael and so addressed in a poem which she wrote to celebrate his beauty, while Mme Meyer-Zundel is likened to the Virgin Mary on the strength of having sent a liver pâté to the rue Washington.

But for the full perfumed essence of this language it is necessary to consult her works in prose and poetry. She was in the entirely Parnassian habit of transcribing poems from the Chinese and the Japanese, and these had wide currency since the first appearance of *Le Livre de Jade* in 1867. Her fables, which are set in China, Japan, India, Palestine, Persia and Ancient Egypt, are informed by a languorous simplicity and a muffled sensuality which, to a certain extent, were shared by other writers of the whole-heartedness with which they are of the whole-heartedness with which they are employed. Who today reads *Le Livre de Jade* or *Le Dragon Impérial*? And who can believe in the times when knights were bold, as they are in *Le temps de la Montagne*, a story of Crusaders in Palestine, and maidens noble? Who can regard these idylls, which seem to issue from a dream of girlhood as much as from the pen of a hard-working writer, as more than amusements, their impact lost with the years that separate the 1870s from the 1980s?

And yet this prose is not negligible. Perhaps it should be anthologized, rather than allowed to remain embedded in fantasy, although it is the strength of the informing fantasy that gives it its power. An example, from a story called *Le Prince à la tête sanglante*, will convey the peculiar resonance of her style, and possibly its adductive qualities:

De l'autre côté de l'étang un frangipianier, merveilleusement, s'épanouit: aux branches nues, rien que le feuillet, de petites fleurs jaunes et blanches d'un odorant parfum; mais tout un peuple d'abeilles, d'insectes et de papillons tourbillonne dans les branches fleuries, avec quel tumulte et quelle joie! Il se gorgent, se soignent, s'affolent; les ailes vibrant sur palpitent; des gouttes d'or, des émeraudes, des flamme, passionnées, fondent sur les pétioles embaumés, les baissent, les mordent, sucent la sève melleuse, pétrissent l'arbre sembler se secouer, remuer: par moments l'arbre semble se secouer, remuer, toujours avide, avec un frémissant plus sonore.

This is not merely an adequate imitation of bees sipping nectar. These are heavenly bees and heavenly flowers, seen nowhere, heard



A fancy-dress party at Judith Gautier's house, 30 rue Washington, at the turn of the century. The photograph is reproduced from the book reviewed here.

nowhere on earth, certainly not in Paris, but imagined from a Chinese scroll painting, improved, made precious, succulent, amorous, yet distant, a phantom exchange between lovers and the beloved. It is Gautier's *transposition d'art* wrought up to correspond with a female sensibility, a female fantasy, and set down uncompromisingly by one who preferred her passions to be literary and cerebral, worshipful and ethereal, and who maintained her extraordinary and authentic gift amid a whirl of daily journalism, debts, and marital anxieties while continuing firmly to believe that she was spiritually Chinese or at least Oriental, a belief that enabled her to write a guide to Tokyo without ever leaving Paris. Her contemporaries were perhaps correct to hold her in awe. She was her father's daughter in more ways than one. She was his indulged favourite and

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attractive enchantment which bound them together in mutual admiration. Wagner's love was of an intense and possibly insane variety, Judith's no less. When Wagner grasped her arm in 1876, she noted, "For me it was as if Christ had suddenly begun to pay court to Mary Magdalen". He perfumed his letters to her with essence of roses. She was instrumental, with her husband, Catulle Mendès, in popularizing Wagner's works in France, or rather in Paris, and whereas Baudelaire had only had the overture to *Tannhäuser* to inflame his admiration, Mendès and his wife pursued the Master's offerings at every first performance, travelling to Brussels for *Lohengrin* and to Munich for *Die Walküre* and never ceasing in their efforts to keep these works in the forefront of the news in Paris.

What breathes through Judith Gautier's work is a sensual chastity or a chaste sensuality, all the more powerful for its being removed in time and distance from the mundane circumstances of ordinary feelings. And it is extraordinarily powerful. The childlike simplicity of the stories is interspersed with descriptions of exalted physicality, like the one quoted above. But, in these stories, love and death go hand in hand, and consummation is not of this world. Her own consummation is a matter of more than local interest. After a short marriage, a possible liaison with Hugo, a Platonic rapture shared with Wagner, and the admiration of many young men, she found peace at last with a jolly girl from Mulhouse some thirty years her junior. Suzanne Meyer-Zundel possessed an unusual and indeed unchallenged gift: she was able to fashion lifelike flowers out of breadcrumbs, an endowment which earned her the nickname of Mademoiselle Mie-de-Pain. She was also rich and of a devoted dis-

position. Her account of their friendship, *Quinze ans auprès de Judith Gautier*, supplements Judith's autobiography, *Le Collier des Jours*, from which most of the matter of this excellent biography is taken. How far things went with Miss Breadcrumbs cannot, of course, be known; when they met, the twenty-two-year-old girl was clumsy and passionate and clearly unfitted for normal life as a woman, but Judith's amorous poems to her may have been part of her general withdrawal from the world of men and into the world of animals, pets, and acolytes. There was, in any event, no scandal surrounding the liaison; indeed Judith Gautier's outstanding gift was her ability to impress herself on public opinion without making the slightest concession in its direction.

It is entirely fitting that towards the end of her life she became monosyllabic, and, when forced to speak, would use words carelessly, as if they scarcely interested her. At the same time, anything written – letters, poems, the occasional article – remained wonderfully clear. She was a genuine eccentric, a "nun of art", finally at home in the rue Washington with the lizards and the snakes and the tortoises and the cats, entertaining the Emperor of Annam, dressed like a fortune-teller, feeding her guests on pineapples and locoum and black olives, and quite firm in the belief that she was the reincarnation of a Chinese princess. Joanna Richardson does full justice to a woman who at first sight might not have much claim on the attention. It is to Miss Richardson's credit that one closes her book with a feeling of respect for this unlikely academician, whose independent life entitles her to an honourable place in the pantheon of French women of letters, from George Sand or even Mme de Staël to Colette.

The real and the ribald

D.D.R. Owen

CHARLES MUSCATINE
The Old French Fabliaux
219pp. Yale University Press. £21.50.
0300 035276

With persuasive elegance that avoids jargon or modish psychoanalytic theory, Charles Muscatine tells us a great deal in a relatively short space about the scarcely elegant genre of the fabliaux. His aim is to show that these preponderantly scabrous poems merit serious attention for the evidence they provide to help us fill out the cultural history of medieval France and form a rounder view of medieval sensibility in general. He is, however, quite undogmatic, his method more exploratory than assertive; and the resulting study is certainly the best introduction to the genre in English. For the non-specialist, translations are supplied for Old French titles and excerpts (even foreign critics are cited in English), and there is a convenient list of all accepted fabliaux together with editions and translations.

Looking first at the literary background, Muscatine falls back on Le Gentil's remark: "The fabliau has its roots in the real." Medieval realism, though, he sees as running hand in hand with caricature and comedy, whereas the major genres are vehicles for an imaginative idealism. One might mischievously wonder whether the romance's tournaments, roost peacocks, thrones and courtesies are less "real" than the markets, sides of bacon, box-beds and obscenities of the fabliau, or whether the latter's situations are not more wildly remote from everyday experience, their characters more typed than many in the serious genres. But this would be mere toying with terms in the face of Muscatine's reflective and judicious arguments.

Considering the genre's social background, he rejects as too extreme the theories of bourgeois or courtly origins associated with Bédier and Nykrog. His own more eclectic judgment is backed by a valuable survey of conditions in the thirteenth century, which saw the weakening of the rigid feudal structure, wealth replacing privilege, social mobility and close links between town and country. There

Founding mother

David Coward

OLYMPÉ DE GOUGES
Oeuvres
Edited by Benoit Groult
238pp. Paris: Mercure de France. 139fr.

Olympe de Gouges was born Marie Gouze at Montauban in 1748, the daughter of a butcher or, as she believed and as seems more than likely, of Le Franc de Pompignan, poet and butt of Voltaire. She was guillotined in 1793. Long since venerated as the founding mother of modern feminism, she proves on inspection to have been far less pretty than she is usually painted. Paradoxically, this selection of her garrulous, self-advertising and occasionally acute writings does her no service. Olympe in the wings of history nobly declaiming that "Women have the right to go to the scaffold but not to speak in the Nation's Assemblies" is one thing. Olympe centre-stage, in the limelight she craved, smiting all-comers rather than militant in the cause, is quite another. More inspiring dead than read, she leaps off the page in a blaze of self-importance.

Widowed at eighteen, she removed to Paris, where she acquired a reputation as a *femme galante* which she never lived down. By 1780 or so, she had determined to make her way as a playwright. Never much of a hand with a pen, she claimed to have dictated thirty plays of which ten, she thought, had merit. The *Comédie-Française* disagreed and rejected her anti-slavery play, *L'Esclavage*, in 1785. She cried persecution, a word which remained in her vocabulary until her death.

By 1788, she had turned her attention to politics and, in all, dictated over forty tracts on

a variety of subjects: the care of the poor, the fate of illegitimate children, the slave-trade, the reform of maternity wards, the hygiene of meat and the need for a voluntary tax (ie failing that, a wealth tax) to pay off the national debt and finance her charitable projects. Others, equally hopeful of seeing their reforms written into a constitution and their names into the annals of history, churned out comparable *vues* and *pétitions*, and, like them, Olympe protested when she saw her ideas in rival mouths. She too made capital out of the neglect she suffered: denied pensions and honours, her patriotism was all the purer. It was a card she played several times, notably in January 1793, when she threatened to denounce the "incivisme" of a troupe of actors (ie, accuse them of treason) who had refused to stage her latest play, an awful but unquestionably patriotic pageant. Yet there can be no doubting her zeal for the Revolution. She was first a constitutional monarchist before embracing the Girondist cause – and most of the Girondins, the scoffers said – with a courage verging on folly. She fulminated openly against Robespierre, whom she regarded as ambition on legs. It was for her politics and not for her feminism that she went to the scaffold.

Her feminism was revolutionary in the most literal sense: now that Frenchmen had thrown off the yoke of tyranny, reason and justice required them to extend their new freedoms to women. But her *Déclaration des Droits de la Femme* (1791) also used startlingly modern arguments to outline a comprehensive programme of reform, which has yet to be fully achieved. Women had connived at the inferiority thrust upon them and were their own worst enemies. They would never be free until they demanded what was theirs – equal rights with men, upheld in law, to own property, hold public office, exercise political power, seek employment, determine the rate and distribution of taxes and stand as full partners in marriage. It was an altogether bolder and more radical platform than anything imagined by Mary Wollstonecraft, whose bourgeois-oriented *Vindication* appeared only months later. However, when it is set against her driving personal ambition, it is difficult to avoid thinking that the *Déclaration* was a manifesto dedicated more to the liberation of Olympe de Gouges than to the freeing of all women. Female solidarity had no appeal for her, and, though she participated in a few well-publicized demonstrations, she remained a leader without followers. Still, she only claimed to be right; she never said she was an angel.

Benoit Groult, though, strains hard to put her on a pedestal. She rightly remarks upon Olympe's charisma, which she very plausibly attributes to a gift for passionate phrasemaking. But her edition scarcely inspires confidence – not because Mme Groult knows so little about the period or because her editorial interventions are discreet to a fault, but because she writes with more than a touch of the party-devotional. Olympe's campaign against slavery is massaged into a very modern feminist concern for black minority rights, for instance, and, more generally, when Groult cannot duck the embarrassment of explaining her heroine's "vanité puérile", she invariably allows only the most sympathetic contemporary witnesses to speak, thereby suggesting that Saint Olympe had no warts at all. Olympe de Gouges appears to have been a ghastly woman, rather as Rousseau was a ghastly man. It does not help to make her seem better than she was. She was right, after all, and that should be enough.

In *La Place de la Madeleine: Writing and Fantasy in Proust* (translated by Carol Matrangola Bové with Paul A. Bové. 165pp. University of Nebraska Press. £16.95. 0 8033 1670 X), the novelist Serge Doubrovsky sets out to overturn previous critical approaches to Proust: "I believe Proust has been, overly aestheticized, ascepticized. I would like to return his aggressive thrust to him, to restore his violence." Doubrovsky's readings of Proust are psychoanalytical and, as the title of his book perhaps indicates, his method is to proceed to revelation by means of word-play and association. *Place de la Madeleine* was first published in 1974 and reviewed in the TLS of May 17th of that year.

Autumn of the Enlightenment

Derek Beales

FRANCO VENTURI
Sottocento riformatore: Volume Four, La caduta dell'Antico Regime, 1776-1789
Part Two: Il patriottismo repubblicano e gli impatti dell'Est
1065pp. Turin: Einaudi. L. 55,000.
8016 05664

Physically the fifth, this is nominally Volume Four. Part Two, of Franco Venturi's vast study, "The Reforming Eighteenth Century". The numbering difficulty betrays the fact that the work has grown in scope as well as in scale. Beginning with a volume entirely devoted to the Italian Enlightenment of the mid-century, it has developed into a history of European reform and revolution in the 1770s and 1780s as seen through contemporary Italian eyes. In short, the title of the whole "fourth volume" does, the still wider theme, "the fall of the ancien régime"; and the evidence used in it is often non-Italian.

In Volume Four, Part One, America and the larger states of western Europe were considered. In Part Two the rest of the Continent is dealt with, including at one extreme the Netherlands, northern and southern, at the other both Russia and Turkey – but, curiously, virtually excluding central and southern Italy

and the whole of Germany, even Prussia. As always, Professor Venturi illuminates everything he touches. His fundamental sources are contemporary periodicals, mostly Italian. He gleams from them an extraordinary and enlightening range of information and opinions, though his success in doing so depends on the amazingly broad knowledge of modern historical writing he deploys in selecting and appraising them. But his most fruitful technique is to seize upon some little-known Enlightened figure's career and *oeuvre*, to place them in their context, and then to illustrate from his activities and publications the events and attitudes of a relevant part of Europe. Where possible, it is an Italian that is chosen. Venturi exploits the writings of Carliantonio Pilati and Giovanni Ferri on Holland; Italians' funeral orations on Maria Theresa; the works and correspondence of the Verri brothers on Joseph II; the travelogues of Francesco Grisolini, Domenico Sestini and Lazzaro Spallanzani on, respectively, the Banat, Transylvania and Turkey; and the involvement of Scipione Piattoli in Polish affairs. The next best thing is a work by a non-Italian that was translated, published or well-known in Italy. Failing any of these, publications of every provenance in many languages are brought into play, always with an awareness of their European and intellectual significance, so that the reader finds himself looking afresh at familiar personalities like

Raynal, Mirabeau, Turgot, Necker, Linguet, Brissot, Sonnenfels and Grimm, as well as learning the significance of hitherto obscure Swiss, Dutch, German and Russian pamphleteers.

"The political initiative", writes Venturi, "had passed into the hands of Joseph II", whose attempt "to solve from above all the problems that had been emerging in the other lands of Europe . . . made Vienna the leading centre of this final phase of eighteenth-century reforms which rightly acquired the name 'Josephism'". So the emperor's "great project" (a phrase of Pietro Verri's) takes pride of place in this volume. His reform of the censorship is approximated to a "cultural revolution"; his measures of toleration for Protestants and Jews were, to quote a Florentine periodical, "worthy of the enlightened century in which we live"; in Verri's words, Joseph's ecclesiastical policies had the support of "virtue, reason and 200,000 brave soldiers"; other writers compared him with Luther; he mitigated serfdom in his eastern territories, and imposed enlightenment and centralization on backward Beland; his criminal law reforms embodied the spirit of Beccaria. "That he was an efficient and enlightened reformer it is certainly impossible to deny." So his cruelty and meanness, apparently so far removed from the generosity and humanity of the Enlightenment, arose from his lack of faith in its gradual, autonomous advance.

Like Europe as a whole, he was far away in time from the spring and the high noon of the Enlightenment. He was at work in the autumn, season of harvest but also of fears of coming winter.

Hence, in part, the mixed character of his rule, at once generously liberating and minutely interfering.

His measures provoked open rebellion in Transylvania and Belgium, and overwhelming opposition in Hungary. "Horea's rising [in Transylvania] . . . turned out to be an episode in the final crisis of the ancien régime, in the years which had seen the American and Dutch Revolutions." Like the Dutch revolt, the Belgian uprising of 1787, though suppressed, "contributed, through their constitutional experiments and aspirations, to accelerate and direct the movement of the fall of the ancien régime".

Venturi's portrait of Joseph II, and his discussion of the emperor's reforms and of the reaction against them, are all both notably sympathetic and penetrating. Much of the material used is new or virtually unknown, many of the author's comments are striking and original. Even so, this section illustrates the limitations that such an immense survey cannot escape. It is odd that the extent of the support Joseph received in Belgium, Hungary and Transylvania does not emerge. It is less surprising that the Church's role is under-

played. The author confessed in the preface to his Volume II that he could not abide certain pious writers of religious history, which he thought far too important a field to be left to the devout. The point can be extended to his coverage of the Reaction as a whole. If he perhaps exaggerates the amount of initial Belgian hostility to the suppressions of monasteries, he fails to bring out the extreme conservatism of the rebels of 1787 who, funded and encouraged by abbots, were explicitly demanding a return to the position of 200 years before. The reactionary lawyer who led the Belgian revolution, Van der Noot, is scarcely discussed, whereas the radical peasant, Horea, receives much attention.

This is a crucial issue, because it shows the weakness of the book's framework, derived as it is from the superannuated thesis of the Atlantic, general or Democratic Revolution. How does one situate, on the one hand, the obscurantism of Belgian rebellion and, on the other, the modernity of Joseph's reforms, in relation to "the fall of the ancien régime"? Is it to be understood that Joseph himself helped to bring it down? Or that the rebels, while trying to uphold the existing order with unexampled archaism, contrived to destroy it? Surely the fact is that the ancien régime actually fell (outside America) only in France – and incidentally not till after the period covered by this volume – and that revolutionary France then destroyed it in some other countries, by invasion, during the wars of 1792-1815. As for Poland, Russia and Turkey, it is hard indeed to fit them into the framework of "the fall of the old régime, 1776-1789".

Fortunately, Venturi does not make much of his title and his general thesis, and often writes as though he had forgotten them. Usually, the reader is left to enjoy the new insights that tumble over one another on page after page. Among the most interesting sections are the re-evaluation of the Genevan and Dutch revolts in the general context of republicanism; a fascinating discussion of the image of Catherine's Russia; and an account of the immediate antecedents of the French Revolution which, by using unfamiliar sources and setting the story against the rich international background already provided, puts a novel complexion on some of the most intensely studied months in history. Venturi's great project may be bursting at the seams, but it fully justifies his own defence of his method:

The reading of the gazettes, letters and lesser writing of these years has confirmed me in the conviction that they always constitute a useful means to understanding the cosmopolitan world of the Enlightenment . . . even today they are capable of enlightening in present-day historians that lively sense of curiosity which we recognise in so many eighteenth-century documents and which is too often lacking in our own historical writing.

Professor Venturi's curiosity is always exciting.

Cartesian convictions

D. W. D. Owen

ANTONY FLEW
David Hume: Philosopher of moral science
189pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £22.50 (paperback, £7.95).
0631 173251

Antony Flew's book employs the interesting strategy of discussing Hume in the light of the claim "that almost all his conclusions are, for better or for worse, conditioned and sometimes determined by an interlocking set of Cartesian assumptions". Flew summarizes them as follows:

First comes the assumption that all arguments must be either deductive or defective, since the only sufficient reasons for believing any proposition are (other) propositions which entail it. Second is the notion that we are (all of us) forever imprisoned behind Veils of Appearance, since we can never be immediately aware of any mind-independent realities. Third, and finally, it is argued or assumed that we essentially are incorporeal subjects of (only) the limited and ingrown sort of experience allowed for under the second of these three principles.

One of the delights of studying and teaching Hume is that it is almost never appropriate to answer simply yes or no to questions like "Did Hume think that persons are incorporeal?" His position is always more subtle than the traditional categories. His attitude towards all three Cartesian assumptions cannot be accurately described by claiming, simply, that he subscribed to them. For instance, it is difficult to claim that the author of the most devastating critique of the representative theory of perception is committed to thinking, much less assuming, that we are (all of us) forever imprisoned behind Veils of Appearance.

Among the nice features of the book is Flew's claim that there need never have been a debate concerning whether Hume was a naturalist or a sceptic. Clearly he wanted to be both. The interesting question is how, and how far, he succeeded. Flew might have had interesting things to say about this issue, especially with regard to the Cartesian assumptions. Instead, however, we get a perfunctory dismissal, on the grounds of inconsistency, of Hume's attempt to combine scepticism with positive moral science. Flew castigates not only Hume, but those he has influenced: "too many of Hume's successors have been equally complacent about this flagrant and fundamental inconsistency."

In general, Flew's discussion, when he gets down to particular topics such as induction, perception, personal identity etc, tends to be short, aggressive, elusive, and unhelpful. Nothing as elegant as Barry Stroud's division of these topics into the negative and positive halves, which is an interesting way of combin-

ing Hume's scepticism and naturalism, emerges. Little attention is paid to Hume's particular arguments about these subjects, some of which are deservedly among the most famous in the history of philosophy. For instance, Flew admits that the first two Cartesian assumptions support Hume's contention that no philosophical argument can rationally ground our belief in an external world. But he then claims that "the main philosophical profit to be gained from Hume's attempt to explain what causes us to have that belief 'lies in its unadmitted suggestions that and how those convictions themselves should have been challenged'."

Such quotations give some idea of the bad-tempered, bombastic style in which the book is written. But the pre-emptive dismissal of many of Hume's more famous arguments or illustrations is even more alarming. Flew purports to be an admirer of Hume (he talks about the "respectful, affectionate yet always critical study" of Hume) and in some ways he demonstrates a thorough knowledge of and good feel for his writings. Yet, to give another example, he calls Hume's introduction of the "missing shade of blue" case "outrageous", and his response to the case "scandalous". "For, notoriously, any universal generalization is decisively falsified by even one single genuine counterexample." Since the missing shade of blue is one of those important examples that is carried over almost exactly from the *Treatise* to the *Enquiry*, Flew of all people should have considered it more carefully.

Flew himself is capable of providing counterexamples to his own generalizations. In this book, nothing is emphasized more than Hume's commitment to the three Cartesian presuppositions. Yet, when discussing an issue concerning causation, Flew writes that "here, as in his account of our beliefs about the external world, Hume sometimes forgets his Cartesian presuppositions; though the offences are certainly more flagrant and more frequent there." Is this a *defence* of the attribution of the second Cartesian assumption to Hume?

It is difficult to understand why and for whom this book was written. The dust-jacket claims it to be "an ideal introduction for students of philosophy and of political and social science who are approaching Hume for the first time." But there is too little discussion of Hume's actual arguments for that. More advanced students and Hume scholars will find Flew's methodological points of interest, but these could easily have been covered in an article or two. One hint is given by Flew himself, when describing the many other rather good books recently published about Hume: "several of the more general books have been, potboilers, written simply to fill a well-shaped gap in some series."

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The master of megalomania

Joseph Rykwert

LEON KRIER (Editor)
Albert Speer: *Architect 1932-1942*
245pp. Archives d'Architecture Moderne,
Rue Defacqz 14, 1050, Brussels.
287143063

Mir fällt zu Hitler nichts ein — "Nothing occurs to me about Hitler", the opening sentence of Karl Kraus's *Third Walpurgisnacht* came to mind as I looked through *Albert Speer: Architect 1932-1942*. Kraus never published his anti-Nazi pamphlet, since he thought that it would only endanger his readers' lives — and "brutal force is no subject for polemics, nor insanity a subject for satire". I do not record this to make a parade of banal anti-Nazi sentiments, but by way of reflection on what is being done in this book, which is a justification, even a eulogy of Hitler's favourite architect, the "decorator" of his great power masques, the executor of his plans for Berlin and Nürnberg, and his wartime Minister of Munitions. It is not about Speer's almost unlimited power as an organizer, but about his achievement as an architect which is presented as quite divorced from any moral or political overtones.

Speer (it is here contended) was a "classical" architect. I am not quite sure what the word means, except that it suggests the use of antique-type columns and mouldings; though a category which has to include (say) Ictinus who designed the Parthenon, the twelfth-century Benedetto Antelami of Parma, Alberti, Borromini and Speer does not seem of any use for any same purpose. The authors of this book further contend that whatever it is, classical architecture obeys an internal logic, and has no reference to outside values or any historical context. Unlike "modernism", which claimed to express "the spirit of the age" or "function", "classical" architecture is wholly abstract, and may therefore be equally applicable to Stalin's and to Hitler's despotism, or even to the "decadent" capitalism of the United States — since Speer was a contemporary of Zhdanov and Iofan as well as of John Russell Pope, architect of the National Gallery in Washington, of the Jefferson monument there — and incidentally of the "Georgian" American Embassy buildings in Grosvenor Square in London. Apart from appropriating antique features, it is not at all clear how such a logic (method might have been a more helpful word) operates.

However, the book has a hidden, or at any rate an implicit agenda, which is more interesting than what it purports to present. The name of the publisher provides an indication: the Archives d'Architecture Moderne in Brussels is an admirable enterprise, a cross between a national drawings collection, a research institute and a publishing house, and owes its being and nature to the zany genius of Maurice Culot: a historian, polemicist, *gauchiste* politician and community agitator, he has now been seconded to the Institut Français d'Architecture and is therefore an influential figure, with whose blessing the book appears. Culot and Leon Krier (a Luxemburger who has lived in London for some years) have collaborated for a decade or more; they have both professed their passionate belief in the integrity of the historic (that is, pre-industrial nineteenth century) urban texture, the value of the craftsman and retail trader in the city, of "traditional" materials (wood, stone, brick), and small-scale farming as well as their detestation of the high-rise, "zoned", modern town. Ruskin, Morris and Kropotkin were invoked by Krier as culture heroes; Culot has made much of the infamous Kaganovich report, which defended the existing Soviet cities against avant-garde planners, and ushered in the era of socialist realism in Soviet architecture. In the battle against Modernism, Speer is being proposed by Krier and Culot as the guide who will lead us out of our perplexed age into a new classicism.

The book has a relatively brief text, in French and English: a proface written by Albert Speer himself, an attractive, spirited, aggressive essay on the "Architecture of Desire" by Krier, and a poker-faced account of "Classicism in the Twentieth Century" by Lars Oluf Larsson, the Swedish historian who has already produced a separate account of Speer's

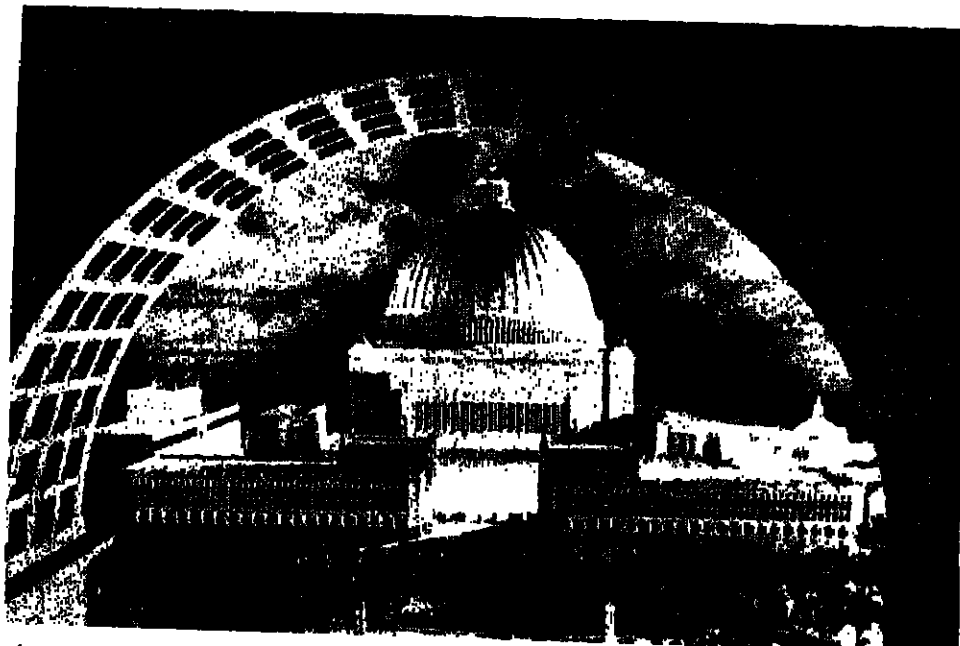
Berlin project. It will certainly circulate freely and influentially through schools of architecture in several countries (though perhaps not in Germany) and therefore requires notice.

Krier has long been an admirer of Albert Speer, who died in 1981 in his mid-seventies on a visit to London to promote one of his publications. Speer was still under thirty when he rose to fame and power. He had been the teaching assistant of Heinrich Tessenow, a steadfast proponent of the principles of sobriety, order, craftsmanship, traditional materials and decentralization at the Berlin Academy. Although his class tended to attract the Nazi students (while his equally famous "Expressionist" colleague Hans Poelzig attracted the Communists), Tessenow was so hostile to the Nazis that Speer could not confess to him that he had joined the party in 1931. Yet within months of joining, Speer would become Hitler's everyday architectural interlocutor. He was to build the Party rally ground at Nürnberg (as part of a vast layout which was to include Hitler's mausoleum), the ominous chancellery building in which Hitler died, and draw up a plan for a truly megalomaniac scheme for the

retribution.

The authors of the book make a brief disclaimer on the half-title which they seem to think quite sufficient to cleanse the publication of any political taint. "Classical architecture and the passion for building", they say, "are its sole subject, and its sole justification." Yet Speer himself contradicts them in the opening sentences of his preface: "My buildings were not solely intended to express the essence of the National-Socialist movement. They were an integral part of that movement." And he exonerates his designs by a Goethean epigraph: "as long as it lasts, delusion holds invincible truth". Inevitably, however repentant politically, he felt that by forswearing his architectural achievement he would be doing violence to himself.

Later in his preface he, too, makes a distinction: his buildings represented the politics of the Nazi Party in their scale, but could not represent its ideology. Surely it should be the other way round: they represent only its ideology, not its politics? Neither Speer nor his co-authors enlarge on this proposition; the reader is to examine the Speer drawings for



A maquette of the unbuilt Berlin Triumphal Arch. It is reproduced here from the book reviewed on this page. Speer did not claim to have designed it but rather to have translated it from sketches and measured drawings executed by Hitler in 1925. A version of this model was presented by Speer to Hitler on his fiftieth birthday. The semi-circular arch was to span eighty-seven metres, and the triumphal, which would have complemented the distant dome, would have carried a 140 by ninety metre colonnaded square, 100 metres above the avenue below.

enlargement of Berlin, of which that chancellery was to be a fragment.

At first Speer worked in association with the much older Ludwig Troost (Hitler's architectural mentor), the designer of the Party headquarters in Munich, and of the House of German Art there. When Troost died in 1934, Hitler toyed with the idea of taking over the office himself: he was a passionate if frustrated architect, and unlike the other dictators of his era could and did read plans. He therefore breathed down his architect's neck much of the time — and even designed some of the "Eagle's Nest" at Berchtesgaden as well as the never-to-be-built Berlin Triumphal Arch (on the scale of the Eiffel Tower rather than of the Parisian Arc de Triomphe); also the first project for the vast central hall which Speer was to transform into a dome for sheltering 180,000 (standing) Party members. Building virtually stopped by 1940, but not the designing; Speer went on discussing these (and other architectural) projects with his Führer even in the last dark days before the bunker suicide. As a thirty-year-old beginner handed the largest commission in the world's building history, he was overwhelmed and remained grateful.

At forty Speer was one of the accused at the Nürnberg trials, and was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment; spent mostly at Spandau, where he wrote the diary which granted him a second career on his release. That diary and his memoirs (some 1,200 pages in all) have been best-sellers in German and translated into several languages: they make fascinating reading, besides being the most trustworthy account of the workings of Hitler's immediate entourage. Speer admired Hitler intensely, was wholly fascinated by him, yet he was the only one of the Nazi elite who expressed public repentance for the misdeeds of the régime and

their abstract value. I find them (others may find otherwise) wholly graceless. Yet if the "classical" method or logic which these projects claim to follow — and it is that of the public buildings designed in late nineteenth-century academic schools — has any rationale to it, the drawings can also be criticized and even judged. Its teachers made a virtue, for instance, of varying room-plans as much as possible, and juxtaposing them: the merit of a project lay, at least partly, in creating as little solid infill in the interstices as possible.

Though Speer's buildings lack such merits it may be argued in his favour that he had to plan and build very quickly: Bismarck's chancellery had to be enlarged about tenfold for Hitler in the course of one year. Even so, its vast rooms (the marble gallery is 146 m by 12 m, more than twice the Galerie des Glaces at Versailles) were planned without any relief of ingenuity. Solid infill was massive, and some quite large halls were deformed by the ungainly manipulation of plan shapes. Ecole des Beaux-Arts students would have been expected to do better *en loge*, in examination conditions. As for the ornament, it seems pinched though very expensive: blowy Biedermeier versions of Napoleonic Empire, with mouldings and columns given thin, mean detail, much inferior to the conventional garish. In photographs, at any rate, the general effect is that of a tawdry, B-feature Hollywood version of Roman; even if Speer himself compares them more flatteringly to a film-set of Cecil B. de Mille's.

Perhaps the most dismissive judgement on it all was that of his old master, Heinrich Tessenow, to whom he showed off the Party-rally installations, the Zeppelinfeld in Nürnberg, having seen the vast travertine "backdrop" with its banks of flags and of searchlights pointed at the sky to make "the Cathedral of

Ice", Tessenow said: "Do you think you have really accomplished something? It is complete [sic] macht Eindruck, that is all." It is to be credited that he quotes his teacher's reproaches from his teaching post, and although Speer's instance) he was restored to rank and salary, he was retired. He steadfastly refused to have anything to do with the Nazis and their big buildings, and did not return to the professional world until 1945, when he was "discovered" by the Russians. His writings are still unknown in France and Britain.

Krier protests at the blindness of the 1980s to the architects, Percier and Fontaine, who defeated him; and Walter Rathenau, one of Wilhelmine Germany's most important industrialists, was made Minister of Reconstruction after the defeat of 1918. Speer, on the other hand, was locked up. In his memoirs Speer explains it to himself: there was a qualitative difference between Napoleon's and Hitler's régimes on the one hand, and Hitler's on the other. The truism only has to be stated because the authors of the book seem unaware of it, as they are unaware of the difference between the involvement of technicians and that of artists, and architects in particular. Speer himself seems unwilling to draw the further conclusion that his buildings cannot be seen as abstract propositions, since whether ideological only or political only their aim, their design was to publish and broadcast the grandeur of the *Tausendjährige Reich*, and they cannot be "read" in any other way. For Leon Krier, they have even less to do with Ruskin, Morris, Kropotkin and his other culture heroes than Ricardo Bofill's present-concrete pseudo-antique colossi in the Parisian suburbs.

Architecture cannot transcend its context completely. Nor are the rules of architecture ever quite free of history. Yet even in the matter of mathematical proportion (which is about the closest such rules get to being "transcendent") Krier seems unaware of what is involved: since he publishes diagrammatic elevations of the Great Hall and the Chancellery with any number of different-sized squares (from 1 to 7, with equilateral triangles and golden sections) applied to them without any sense of how such regulating lines should be relating one part of the building to another, or any sense that there are traditional (if not transcendent) rules of thumb about their harmony or discord. It is something that Tessenow, as a pupil of the Thiersch brothers, would have found familiar. Peter Behrens used proportions in a very accomplished way, and certainly taught Corbusier much about it. Any examination of the drawings and photographs in this book will show the careful reader that Speer had no mastery of the skills which were associated with nineteenth-century academic design: just another cult-figure for some old-fashioned masochist camp.

Yet there is nothing camp about this book. It is not even offered as another ingredient for the post-modernist brew, but as the true and only way to a new architecture. Shock tactics: what this book may really be about. It is an attempt, by using the abrasive and attention-focusing figure of Speer (Tessenow, or the less familiar but admirable de Finetti would have made better exemplars on grounds of common ideology and architectural ability), to propagate two separate and equally pernicious ideas: the first is that there is a timeless correct "classical" architecture which has been tainted by association with tyranny, but which can now be rescued by being declared wholly abstract. Second, and I think contradictorily, that this architecture is the acceptable face of craftsmanship, *petit-bourgeois* living in smaller cities, to which we must all return as soon as possible, and that Albert Speer provides the example of how this might be achieved.

As will be clear, I do not accept either of the propositions separately or together. The real problems of architecture are about other things. Still, whatever I write here will have no effect on the students of architecture in the United States, in France, Italy, Spain, yes, and Latin America who will not read the texts in this book, but will certainly copy the plates. I am afraid that we will find grim echoes of it in the WGBH housing estates in about five to ten years' time.

Desmond King-Hele

DAVID ELLISTON ALLEN
The Botanist: A history of the Botanical Society of the British Isles through a hundred and fifty years
230pp. Winchester: St. Paul's Bibliographies.
090795362

This is a book that might have been as dull as ditchwater: its essence is caught in a splendid photograph (from 1931) of a venerable gentleman in a city suit with wing collar, standing by a stream of ditchwater and keenly examining a specimen of Loddon pondweed. But there is nothing stagnant about David Allen's lively story of the Botanical Society of the British Isles and its predecessors. Polonius had the right word for it: "tragic-comical-historical-pastoral".

The story begins with the founding of the Botanical Society of London in 1836. There was strong popular interest in botany in Britain during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, generated by Linnaeus and exemplified in the creation of the Linnean Society, the many textbooks on botany, the great literary success of Erasmus Darwin's *Loves of the Plants* and the artistic triumphs of Thornton's *Temple of Flora*. Enthusiasm waned in the early years of the nineteenth century, but began to revive in the 1830s. As the Linnean Society was committed to the furtherance of the Linnaean system, there was room for an easy-going Society to cater for collectors as well as scientific botanists. Even before the Botanical Society of London began, a tongue-comic element crept in, because the Botanical Society of Edinburgh was formed five months earlier and inevitably stole many potential members. Still, the Botanical Society of London did succeed in being born, and it survived for twenty years. Its leading spirit was H. C. Watson, who was very active in organizing exchanges of plants among members. Not all members paid their subscriptions, however, and it was deemed ungentlemanly to harry them: this was probably at the root of the Society's financial collapse in 1856.

The plant exchanges were kept up by J. G. Baker at Thirsk, with his "Botanical Exchange Club", until a disastrous fire in 1864 destroyed his premises and all his possessions, including thousands of plant specimens. Out of the ashes arose a new Botanical Exchange Club in 1866 and, despite sporadic quarrels, this Club was still going strong in 1915 under the dictatorial

rule of G. C. Druce, its "Secretary". Druce's death proved to be another disaster: the Club, or Society as it was often called, found itself in a real mess, because nearly all its belongings were in Druce's house and its money in his personal bank account. Struggles with the executors lasted until 1939, when the war intervened, and brought further disaster, for the Treasurer was killed and all the records destroyed during the London bombing in 1941. Even so, the organization was kept going until after the war.

Now at last we meet the Botanical Society of the British Isles, formed as a fresh start in 1948. Quite soon the Society began its pioneering work in mapping species on 10-km squares of the National Grid. About 1½ million records were accumulated, and the *Atlas of the British Flora* published in 1962 has served as the model for many subsequent surveys.

To these bare branches of narrative Allen adds some pleasing foliage — his deft assessments of the social background and personal motives of the early members. Rarely censorious, he relies more on wry humour; and there is also much to applaud. For example, members of more hidebound Societies may be surprised to know that the Botanical Society of London admitted women from the outset. This liberality probably filtered through from the late eighteenth century, when the idea of ladies botanizing was generally accepted — though not by the Revd Richard Polwhele, who in his poem "The Unsex'd Females" (1797) was worried that girls studying a plant might "dissect its organ of unallow'd lust".

Allen has made a list of about 400 members of the Botanical Society of London, each (whenever possible) with profession, dates of birth and death, and place of residence. The list is fascinating in its diversity. There were not many professional botanists in Britain and they formed only 6 per cent of the total membership. The medical men were the largest group (20 per cent), closely followed at 15 per cent by the "independents", including men with private incomes and most of the ladies (who made up 8 per cent of the total). The remaining 59 per cent form a microcosm of (fairly) polite Victorian society, including booksellers, chemists, clergymen, engineers, gardeners, lawyers, a nail-maker and an umbrella-repairer.

Does the petty bickering of past botanists deserve to be recorded in such detail? Yes, when the task is so well done; Allen has put the Society on the map as effectively as the Society put the species on the map, nearly thirty years ago.

The Rememberers

They whisper war:
When Coventry went up and the Brum horizon
Was a southern Borealis of saffron fire —
That midnight dawn;

Or else the haystack
Somewhere in Hertfordshire, one sleep's distance
From the hush of doodlebugs and yet they woke
Seething ants.

Not history yet
These memories have a life eluding time
Now in this Summer garden where we sit
Rehearsing them.

A child shouts
Unseen among azalea galaxies;
All through the air a yellow gossamer floats
Spoiled by breezes.

Perhaps the past was
Always this far away, always this close:
On deckchairs frothing sheets of yesterday's news
The rememberers doze.

Let night fall:
Then let me, leaving, glimpse behind the car
Two streams of light converge on a black hole
Or unborn star.

W. H. AUDEN

Botanical bickerings

Mixing mechanisms

Rosa Beddington

LYNN MARGULIS and DORION SAGAN
Origins of Sex: Three billion years of genetic recombination
258pp. Yale University Press. £30.
0300033400

According to Lynn Margulis and Dorion Sagan, this book is written for those "who do not yet belong to an already entrenched, restricting thought community". Presumably they anticipate that the old school may not like it. The old school they have in mind consists of those population geneticists and sociobiologists who maintain that sex is a good thing because it generates variation and this is a blessing in a harsh, competitive world governed by natural selection. Margulis and Sagan have a rather different view of the benefits, or otherwise, of sex. They believe it to be a necessary adjunct for increasing specialization and the development of different cell types. Far from being maintained to ensure variation, the reason it is still with us is that it is an insurance against too much variation.

"Sex", in this case, refers neither to gender nor to the act of reproduction. It is simply the mixing of genes from two different sources, either within an individual or between individuals. The most primitive form of sex is genetic recombination in bacteria, which is never involved in reproduction. However, the basic mechanisms for incorporating new genes, or DNA, into bacteria, are essentially the same as those used by higher organisms to mix their genes. That such mixing mechanisms exist is probably a legacy from the days when there was little oxygen on earth and, consequently, no ozone layer to protect the genes of micro-organisms from the damaging effects of ultraviolet light: the authors argue that it was the evolution of enzyme systems to repair DNA that laid the foundations for sexual interchanges involving the acquisition and shuffling of genes. But although this may explain why sex is possible, the question why it is still here is another matter.

One of the basic tenets of Margulis's thesis is that the greatest division in the living world is not between plants and animals but between prokaryotes (cells, such as bacteria, in which the genes are not packaged into a membrane-bound nucleus) and eukaryotes (unicellular and multicellular organisms, such as plants and animals, in which they are). An extensive study and knowledge of those micro-organisms, of almost infinite design, which bridge the gap between prokaryotes and eukaryotes, has led Margulis to an imaginative vision of the evolution of eukaryotes. This microscopic world provides living, morphological and molecular evidence for her idea that higher cells are the descendants of symbiotic unions between different microbes which subsequently co-evolved as wholly integrated communities. That is to say that various functions of a eukaryotic cell, such as respiration, motility or photosynthesis, were originally subserved by different bacteria which had invaded or been eaten by larger prokaryotes but, instead of being digested, became permanent beneficial residents within their hosts. Margulis's explanation for the origins of eukaryotic sex follows a similar vein. Essentially, cannibalism combined with indigestion resulted in cells with double the normal number of genes (diploidy). Under certain circumstances this might be advantageous; but other conditions might favour those cells which had managed to divide in two again, thereby reverting to a single copy of the genome (haploidy), and so alternation between haploidy and diploidy might persist under alternating conditions. This may be a plausible description of the earliest eukaryotic sex, but it does not better previous attempts, dismissed by the authors as

bogus arguments for the natural selection of sex, in explaining what it was about sex that assured its immediate survival.

Margulis and Sagan have made an interesting attempt to untangle the fundamental problems posed by the origins of sex. However, although they describe their exercise as a detective story, few thriller plots would survive a background of such mechanical detail. For those already familiar with cell and molecular biology the introductory chapters are repetitive, somewhat superficial and at times plain dull. For those who are not, the starkly presented basic science will hardly be engaging. None the less, the book has one great strength — its comprehensive survey of the fascinating vagaries of sex throughout the living world, and in particular among the most primitive of eukaryotic ancestors. The old school, among others, may find some of the reasoning unpalatable, but even flawed arguments can provide new perspectives.

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American notes

Christopher Hitchens

The death notices of Andy Warhol and David Susskind were so closely packaged together in the electronic news that not a few people thought Warhol must have died on the David Susskind show. No less to the point, many people would have quite believed that Warhol had arranged his exit in such a way.

So much of the current vernacular is Warholian that one hardly notices his influence. The notion of the "media event", the transition from the fictional celebrity to the imagined actual person, the seepage between advertising and aesthetics, the practical joker as philosopher—all this descends from Warhol and his appalling frankness. Instead of writing, as a fastidious critic might have done, that these days people have difficulty separating consumer items from artefacts, Warhol merely observed as much and moved in on the observation. In America, he noticed flippantly, most people thought Art was a man's name.

His most famous reflection on celebrity was actually less good than it is usually made to sound. "In the future", he remarked, "every-one will be world famous for exactly 15 minutes". Like most of what he said and did, this doesn't bear much scrutiny. But in its softer, anecdotal, over-repeated form it wore smoothly down to an aphorism, and one to which the age had continual resort. We have Leo Braudy's *Frenzy of Renown* and Daniel Boorstin's *Image: A guide to pseudo events in America*. Two decades separate the two books, but it is Warhol's maxim that will survive, and survive because of its frivolity. It has lasted precisely because it was a throwaway remark.

The same commitment to the disposable, and to the durability of the ephemeral, has fixed Campbell's soup cans and old-style Coca Cola bottles in the general imagination. Much the same goes for Marilyn Monroe and Jackie Kennedy, the passing clouds of glamour and beauty, whom Warhol captured on his silk

screen. (It was the dashing Robert Kennedy who denied Warhol his own fifteen minutes in the spotlight. By getting himself shot dead, just after Warhol had been riddled with slugs by the tempestuous Valerie Solanis, Kennedy stole the headlines.)

It is now almost obligatory to consider the 1960s as a hectic stretch between Woodstock and the Manson murders. Since both events took place practically at the end of the decade, this exercise in bad timing and imperfect recall might have pleased Warhol. But his treatment of people as artefacts and productions was never likely to be as safe and playful as his treatment of gimmicks and end products. There came to be something spoiled and bored about the Warhol set; best captured in the dismal story of Edie Sedgwick as set down by George Plimpton and Jean Stein. A sort of prickly narcissism began to infect the magazine *Interview* and the easy-to-recognize, difficult-to-identify set which surrounded it. One critic wrote of the "hard, autistic stare" that showed in the photographs.

It was all really a joke that lost its savour. You can do anything Warhol did, but you can only do it once. Practical jokers are often stuck for an encore. No one will watch the Empire State Building for eight hours on two occasions, or a recumbent, somnolent figure either. This is why Warhol has no imitators, and it is also why he gave up cartoon-art as soon as he found out about Roy Lichtenstein.

There was, at worst, no hypocrisy about Warhol. He even called his studio "The Factory". Without his flatterers he might have become a satirist of the age of image, the era of marketing, the epoch of junk, the culture of variegated uniformity. With or without them, he became a reflection of all these, and died at a time when the whole business of image building and cynical public relations has moved into a stage beyond parody.

As I write, the National Gallery of Art in Washington has announced a "long term loan" exhibit of the thirty-two soup can paintings that

formed Warhol's first one-man show. These run the gamut from "Tomato" and "Cream of Mushroom" to "Green Pea" and "Chicken Noodle". They derive from his oil rather than his silk screen period. The gallery hints that it wants to buy them. So there is permanence for the evanescent, and a solemn national repository for the prankster.

Warhol might have devised and scripted the emerging state of the law as it relates to fictional presentation. Here, as I wrote last month, the frenzy of renown is making fact and reality quite contingent upon that terrible word "perception". It no longer seems to matter whether or not a novel, or film, or play carries the conventional disclaimer about "all persons herein" being fictitious etc. People seem determined to discover themselves in fiction—a version of narcissism that might repay study. Among the precedents for the suit against Ted Hughes and the Sylvia Plath estate, for a film version of *The Bell Jar* over which neither had the least influence nor control, are the following.

A Los Angeles shrink named Paul Bildrin sued Gwen Davis, author of a novel named *Touching*, because he felt sure he occurred in her depictions of California swimming pool therapy. He won, in spite of having no physical or moral resemblance to the hot-tub practitioner Ms Davis had portrayed. The coincidence of "nude marathon" sessions, claimed Bildrin, was a dead giveaway for his own variant of the healing art. The California court of appeal gave him a consoling \$75,000. On the other hand, Ms Kimeri Pring, a former Miss Wyoming, had her award of 26.5 million dollars overturned by Appellate Court because the bench found that it could not identify her in fiction while keeping a straight face. Ms Pring had claimed that she was the model for a story in which a Miss Wyoming causes men to levitate during the execution of the sexual act. And the Revd. Gerry Falwell, who actually claims to be literal minded when it comes to the Old and

New Testaments, also finally lost a case over short story in *Hustler* which speculated on his relations with his mother. But both these consumed enormous amounts of time and great swags of legal emolument. The intrusion into fantasy, and the collusion in it by down-to-earth operators, is a perpetual source of wonder and revulsion.

I feel minded to mention a book that has been much noticed and appears at first glance to be on a well-worn subject. *Homage to the Spanish Exiles* is the distilled experience, told in reported speech, of Dwight Macdonald, with the assistance of Pablo Casals, James Farrell, Norman Thomas, Arthur Schlesinger, and Mary McCarthy, set up an American committee for the hundreds of thousands of Spaniards who had managed to survive dispossession and war. This committee worked dogmatically for people whose plight was the worse being widely unknown or misunderstood.

The memoirs given here are those of generally unsung people who were ground between Fascism and Stalinism in Spain but who did not lose hope. There is, at present, a lively scale fight in progress in the intellectual magazines of New York, concerning the whiteness and propriety of the Spanish Republican cause. The *New Criterion* and *Dissent* have joined battle, and Bernard Knox is about to contribute a salutary essay on the subject to the *New York Review of Books*. Many readers (and some of the writers) are coming to the subject for the first time. The anguished histories told in this book, which combine gasp charm and gaiety with the most appalling accounts of betrayal and disillusion, should be obligatory both for newcomers and for old hands. *Homage to the Spanish Exiles*, with an introduction by Mary McCarthy (330p, \$19.95, 0 89885 325 7) is available from the Human Sciences Press, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York 10011.

AUTHOR, AUTHOR

Competition No 319

Readers are invited to identify the sources of the three quotations which follow and to send us the answers so that they reach this office not later than March 27. A prize of £20 is offered for the first correct set of answers opened on that date, or failing that the most nearly correct—in which case inspired guesswork will also be taken into consideration. Entries, marked "Author 319" on the envelope, should be addressed to the Editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, Priory House, St John's Lane, London EC1M 4BX. The solution and results will appear on April 3.

1 The train! The twelve o'clock for paradise. Hurry, or it will try to creep away. Out in the country everyone is wise: We can be only wise on Saturday.

2 Down the close, darkening lanes they sang their way To the sliding-shed, And lined with train with faces grimly gay.

3 How long ago Hector took off his plume, Not wanting that his little son should cry, Then kissed his son and Andromache goodbye— And now we three in Euston waiting-room.

Competition No 314

Winner: Tony Inglis

Answers:

1 That I was anxious for the success of a work which had employed much of my time and labour, I do not wish to conceal; but whatever doubts I at any time entertained, have been entirely removed by the very favourable reception which it has been honoured to receive. My book more perfect; and in this endeavour I have had the assistance not only of some of my particular friends, but of many other learned and ingenious men, by which I have been enabled to rectify some mistakes, and to enrich the Work with many valuable additions.

Advertisement to the second edition of Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*

2 I am at a loss how to describe the success of the first impression; was exhausted in a few days; a second and third edition were nearly adequate to the demand; and the bookkeeper's property was twice invaded by the pirates of Dublin. My book was on every table and almost on every tongue. It was not only a general voice, but a household word. It was a profound critic. I was encouraged by some

domestic and foreign testimonies of applause; and the second and third volumes incessantly rose in sale and reputation to a level with the first. But the public is seldom wrong; and I am inclined to believe that, especially in the beginning, they are more profit and less entertaining than the first.

Edward Gibbon, "Memoirs of My Life and Writings"

3 He said he did not know the dirty thing he had been handling, he had not read the work, his reader had misadvised him—and *Peccavi! Peccavi!* wept the now beknighted gentleman. Then around me rose such a fussy sort of interest, as when a rare scandalous bit of scandal is being whispered about one. In print my fellow-authors kept scrupulously silent, lest a bit of the tar might stick to them. . . . I submit to the process of publication as to a necessary evil: as souls are said to submit to the necessary evil of being born into the flesh. The vital blow where it lies. And one must submit to the processes of one's day. Personally, I have no belief in the vast public: I believe that only the winnowed few can care. But publishers, like this, must set innumerable seeds on the wind, knowing most will miscarry.

D. H. Lawrence, introduction to *A Bibliography of D. H. Lawrence from Phoenix*.

The Deloitte Haskins and Sells £500 prize for the best hardback or paperback book cover design will be awarded at the London International Book Fair at Olympia on April 16. The competition is open to all designers based in Britain, and further information and entry forms can be obtained from Nick Tate at Deloitte Haskins and Sells, 128 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4A. The W. H. Smith Awards for contemporary illustration—£3,000 for the best overall illustration, regardless of category, two second prizes of £1,000 each, one for book illustration and one for magazine illustration and an unspecified number of £500 awards to be made at the judges' discretion—will be presented to the winners at the opening of an exhibition of the prize-winning works, together with a selection of other entries, at the Victoria and Albert Museum (Room 203) on July 1. Judging will take place in early May and further information can be obtained from Leo De Freitas, c/o the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum (01-589 5371 ext 327).

Letters

The Conquest of Peru

Sir—I am at a loss to understand how Mario Vargas Llosa thinks that simple repetition of the central points of his abridged lecture on Peru in his letter of February 20 in any sense answers the criticism I levelled against it. One did not find his argument unclear, but merely unconvincing.

Although his admission that there is much for which to thank the demographers and ethnohistorians is welcome, he apparently thinks this ground without allowing that it weakens his case for the primacy of so-called "narrative" history. All kinds of historical subjects have their place and each of them has a particular subject to which it may best be applied. Mr Vargas Llosa is plainly unimpressed by his own-fisted and shoddily written Marxist history—this being the type to which his references to "scientific" and "ideologically correct" must apply—and who could fail to be unhappy with bad work, from whatever perspective it is conceived? And yet, the historians with whom he takes issue remain unnamed.

He is certainly free to draw a tenuous link between the violence of Peru's conquest by the Spaniards and contemporary societal difficulties in Latin America, however little such fantasy may help us to understand the complexities of many different countries on two continents. But I am suspicious of such persistent defensiveness about a largely unsuitable approach to historical work—at least for this subject—and the implication that hostility to Romanticism (which I apparently share with these bad historians) amounts to philistinism.

One does not seek to extinguish the role of the individual in re-casting historical discussions, but rather to find a balanced context in which to place him. Of course Hugo is to be admired, but I will take my history from Braudel any time, and from the exponents of the *Annales* school among Latin Americanists.

RODNEY WATSON,
Flat 2, Highbury Court, 15a Highbury Crescent,
London N5.

'Conspiracy of Silence'

Sir—I was pleased to read Nicolas Walter's letter (February 20) replying to Joseph Brodsky's review of Barrie Penrose and Simon Freeman's *Conspiracy of Silence* (January 30). In particular Walter's defence of E. M. Forster's statement, "If I had to choose between betraying my country and my friends, I hope I should have the guts to betray my country". I would, however, like to add some further observations, for, as I discovered during the research for my study of E. M. Forster's stories and essays (Macmillan, Spring 1987), there hardly exists a discussion of Burgess or Blunt or SIS in which that sentence is not recalled, always with the same innuendo as it carries in Brodsky's coy reference to "E. M. Forster's high camp diction", with its hints of Firtbankian excess, self-indulgence and coterie homosexuality. But there is no need thus to particularize and hence trivialize Forster's claim. "Camp"—high or low—is an absurd description of Forster's writing, which is founded on the ethical co-ordinates of personal loyalty, integrity and tolerance. The line need carry no sexual subtext. But even were it to, it would be no less admirable. How many would raise an eyebrow had the choice been between wife and country?

We would do well to remember that it was Montaigne who wrote "a unique and dominant friendship dissolves all obligations". This is no upstart idea; indeed it provided the basis for the long tradition of humane liberalism that Forster found himself ruefully defending in his 1938 essay "Incite (their citizens) to mass action"—and even democracies forget their ideals "as soon as the drums beat and the bombers hum". It was a belief bound up in his awareness of the tragic incapacity of our public institutions. It is not, as he wrote later in the essay, that there are no decent people, but that no device has been found by which these private decency can be transmitted to public affairs. Making the link between public and private obligations is precisely what this "dictum" is about.

It is also worth recalling that Forster became president of the National Council for Civil Liberties in 1934. He wrote and broadcast frequently on the "coming darkness" and he was aware, too, of the degree to which all statements (and the failure to make statements) are political acts. Although he had glimpsed "in the human make-up", as he wrote in "Ferny", the extraordinary essay of Voltaire's and Europe's last moment, "deadness and depths that no acuity could penetrate and no benignity heal", he persisted in his belief in the individual. He would continue, as he wrote in his *Commonplace Book*, "to talk this nineteenth century stuff with a twenty century voice", even as the news from Europe and the news from home (what he called the "shutting down of criticism") became ever more alarming. The (in)famous statement can thus be read as almost a dare to himself. From his perspective in 1938 it seemed more than likely that he would be called to account.

It is about time, as Nicolas Walter reminds us, that those who hasten to dismiss Forster's words ("silly and self-righteous" Roger Scruton called them in a letter to the *TLS*, October 17, 1986), or to use them for a spurious causal link (Cambridge-friendship-treason), stopped to re-read them in the context of the other darkly probing essays in *Two Cheers for Democracy*. They would find a much tougher, perplexed and perplexing assessment of moral choice than the journalistic caricature of the past seventeen years has allowed.

JUDITH SCHERER HERZ,
Concordia University, Montreal.

'Fear, Myth and History'

Sir,—One sign of the current failure of nerve in British historiography is the preoccupation with "revisionism" and degrees thereof. Such friend replies: "My husband was no better. Friend and I'll tell you what I did." Frame 2: Radiant friend finishes whispering to dot-faced Jean: " . . . And in three days all my black-heads and enlarged pores had disappeared."

Frame 3: George, to white-faced, confidently beaming Jean: "Sorry, Jean, I'm late again. Oh! What have you done! You look wonderful!" Frame 4: Friend, inset, on phone: "Did you follow my advice, Jean?" Jean, into receiver: "Yes, with complete success. Now George loves me more than ever" (*Poslednie Novosti*, June 15, 1933).

Other Tokalon advertisements could be crasser still. "Two million women want to get married—but does the colour of your skin matter? . . . Out of 100 men, many of them millionaires, 96 declared that they were attracted most by a woman with soft, white, velvety skin and a face whose colour is young and pretty" (*Poslednie Novosti*, September 15, 1933).

Despite all the evidence already brought against his hypothesis, Professor Struve persists in his attribution (*Vestnik russkogo khristianskogo dvizheniya* 146 [1986]). Surely even *danstog dvizheniya* 146 [1986]). Surely even he cannot argue away the scorn in Nabokov's letter. By 1934 Nabokov and Khodasevich were close enough to let each other in on the hoaxes they staged against their literary opponents in the emigration, who included the *Chista* crowd. Even if Nabokov had written *Roman s kokainom* and for some strange tract but appears, when he wrote it, to have been an isolated individual and not a member of the group with which Rantierism has falsely been identified.

So the substantive issues raised in my book are not critically dealt with in Barry Coward's review and "revisionism"—gauging is the substitute. This seems an unfortunate outcome for my book, your readers and British historiography.

J. C. DAVIS,
Department of History, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

'Cooking Fish'

Sir,—I feel I should point out a fundamental error in the poem, "Cooking Fish", by Domestice Fisher (January 23): "arse" (stanza 2, line 3) should read "arsehole", or, more correctly, "anus". Fish do not have arses.

Support for my view is given by *Chambers Dictionary*: "arse: (now vulg.) n. buttocks." A fish with buttocks—now that I would like to see.

N. L. BARNES,
7 Langdon Road, London NW5.



Which twin uses Tokalon? Nabokov said the magazine *Chista* reminded him of this advertisement—see Brian Boyd's letter, below.

'Novel with Cocaine'

Sir,—One amusing new piece of evidence ought to resolve for good the controversy conducted partly in your pages over Nikita Struve's attribution of *Roman s kokainom* (*Novel with Cocaine*) to Vladimir Nabokov (Letters, August 9 and 30, and December 20, 1985).

In an unpublished letter of July 24, 1934, now at the Beinecke Library, Yale University, Nabokov wrote to his friend the poet Vladislav Khodasevich that he had just seen the new issue of *Chista* (the very issue containing the opening section of *Roman s kokainom*) and as always felt reminded by the journal's style and dubious allure of advertisements for Tokalon facial cream. How dismissive he meant to be can be seen from the advertisement (above) he especially had in mind, one of the more grotesque in the most famous publicity campaign in the Russian émigré press.

Frame 1 in a four-frame comic strip: Jean, in grey half-tone shade, laments to radiantly white-faced friend: "George will be late home. I'm sure he's involved with that blonde again." Friend replies: "My husband was no better. Friend and I'll tell you what I did." Frame 2: Radiant friend finishes whispering to dot-faced Jean: " . . . And in three days all my black-heads and enlarged pores had disappeared."

Frame 3: George, to white-faced, confidently beaming Jean: "Sorry, Jean, I'm late again. Oh! What have you done! You look wonderful!" Frame 4: Friend, inset, on phone: "Did you follow my advice, Jean?" Jean, into receiver: "Yes, with complete success. Now George loves me more than ever" (*Poslednie Novosti*, June 15, 1933).

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J. C. DAVIS,
Department of History, Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Poets in Partnership

Sir,—Hilary Davies's review (February 13) of our books, *The Mudlark Poems* and *Grand Bazaar* and *The Lion from Rio*, is damagingly misleading and infinitely condescending. Shuttle is welcomed back as a good carryat from the "ground that has been so well tilled as to arouse misgivings", this is presumably Davies's viperish way of referring to her womanist work (particularly in our joint book on menstruation, *The Wise Woman*). You would not know from Davies that Shuttle's book contains sexual poems, of one of which Sylvia Kaprielian (*Quipost*, Winter 1980) commented: "I can't remember ever before having read so direct a poem, by a woman, about the act of love."

There are also poems about the unconceived boy-child (the infant animus who becomes inner counsellor), poems of poetic enjoyment of menstruation, of the synaesthetics of dream-life, in praise of vicious and noble animals, and of the delicate power negotiations between adults and children. All this is blurred in Davies, who uses wet blanket phrases like "a wide range of preoccupations", "sensitive exploration" and "genuinely fresh", and even has to put inverted commas round "feminine sensibilities". Where Davies draws aside her skirts, Kantaris is exactly specific: "This is a book about love . . . as a fully realisable way of life despite moments of alienation, anger, distraction and all the inevitable problems of adjustment and readjustment within it."

Nor have Redgrove's poems anything to do with "la nostalgie de la boue", which is Emile Augier's phrase, not what is excluded from everyday life by taboo is a source of power. The *Mudlark Poems* and *Grand Bazaar* are comments on this proposition. Mud is seen as carnal, self-sculpture, world faeces, the plutonic Big Store, tacit fertility, entry to liminality and gateway to Persephone's kingdom. Alcohol is seen as a Rubik's, a delusion, sacrament, self-destruction, sexual induction, frustrator of sex, gourmandizing, instrument of empathy and transformer by fermentation. Thus are exences discriminated, when Davies says they are not. Nor are the poems particularly adjectival. So one must conclude that they have simply got up her nose, and her review is crudely apotropaic.

Though we don't want to indulge in mud-slinging, there is another and uglier possibility. Her first paragraph praises us for being married and yet little influenced creatively by each other (which is not true). The review doesn't seem able to cope with sensuality or the hilarity which goes with it; it is bleakly humourless. It tries to pretend that Shuttle is not sensuous and hates Redgrove for being so, and this stance now looks sexist. It is trying to unmarry us, as though people should not live in creative partnership if they are woman and man.

PETER REDGROVE,
FENELPHE SHUTTLE,
1 Arwyn Place, Falmouth, Cornwall.

Dennis Wheatley's Crime Dossiers

Sir,—I used to be rather ashamed of what Eric Korn calls "Dennis Wheatley's crime dossiers" (February 20): fifty years ago I had literary aspirations and the dossiers were just a joke. But after seeing them described in the *TLS* as "one of the peaks of intellectual, imaginative and typographic achievement, by which . . . our Western civilization may be judged", you must forgive my getting puffed up enough to claim my share of the credit. This was for the idea, the plots and the clues; Dennis Wheatley wrote them and, most importantly, persuaded (or rather bullied) Walter Hutchinson to publish the first one.

Impeccable though Mr Korn's judgment doubtless is, his facts in this case are not quite accurate. Webb and Bower did reproduce the dossiers a few years ago complete with hair, bus-tickets and bloodstains, a typographic wonder indeed. I have not seen the cheap edition with photographs of the clues but, with such a quote, look forward to the royalty statements.

J. J. LINKS,
8 Elizabeth Close, London W9.

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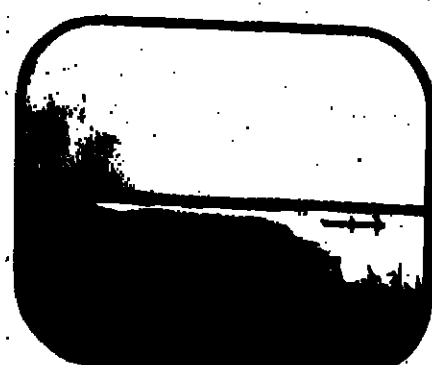
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COMMENTARY

A light foreshadowing

Jonathan Keates

FELIX MENDELSSOHN
Camacho's Wedding
Oxford Playhouse

Mendelssohn once shocked a group of his more serious-minded English admirers, who were piously damning Donizetti's *La Fille du régiment* for its triviality, by saying: "It's charming, so charming that I wish I'd written it myself." He might have learnt a good deal from Donizetti about the most effective uses of music for the purposes of drama, and it seems a pity in any case that as a mature composer he never completed an opera. Pieces like *Elijah* and *Die erste Walpurgisnacht* suggest that this would scarcely have been beyond his imaginative reach.

What does survive is a handful of family entertainments written for musical evenings in Berlin (including *Die beiden Neffen oder Der Onkel aus Boston*) and a full-length *Singpiel, Camacho's Wedding*, which the sixteen-year-old composer completed a few weeks before his monumental string octet *Opus 20*. Produced at the Berlin Schauspielhaus in 1827, the work was a failure, and subsequent neglect has only now been remedied by Oxford University Opera's enterprising revival, based on a reconstruction by Clive Brown and John Warrack of the score and libretto.

Reasons for the work's theatrical demise are all too readily appreciated. Friedrich Voigt's text, based on the Cave of Montesinos episode in *Dan Quixote*, has a sort of heavy charm, without showing much impulse towards character development or contrast, or grasp of the mechanics of dramatic situation. The music seldom manages to overcome such disadvan-

tages. Pace the claims made in the programme for the influences of Spohr and Weber, these are striking by their absence. The elfin horns of German folklore make themselves heard periodically and the heroine Quiteria is realized for us with an unabashed romanticism, but much of the score is strung together from rigid eight-bar *opera buffa* formulas with little to foreshadow the lyricism or lightness of touch which characterize the essential Mendelssohn.

We needed, nevertheless, to hear this piece as part of the current process of Mendelssohn's rehabilitation: though *Camacho's Wedding* is unlikely to join the string quartets or the *lieder* in a return to popular favour, its significance as a pointer to a road not taken is unquestionable. Duncan Watt's direction of the four performances was as lively and intelligent as Clive Brown's conducting of the student orchestra, whose sounds were hardly battered by an arid acoustic. On Peter Ruthven Hall's raised set, which had a Japanese feeling, the cast featured an affecting Quiteria in Yvonne Barclay and a well-matched Don Quixote and Sancho Panza in David Guest and Philip Judge.

The second Irish Festival, "Siamsa Cois Uisce", at Watermans Arts Centre from March 8 to 31, includes the showing of two specially-commissioned, one-act plays: *Mainland* by Daniel Magee and *Ronnie's Doing Well* by Michael McKnight. In addition, the Festival will present productions by the Arc Theatre, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland, and Red Kettle Theatre. There will also be readings and discussions by Desmond Hogan, Paul Durcan, Michael Longley and Paul Muldoon. Further information is available from Watermans Arts Centre, 40 High Street, Brentford, Middlesex TW8 0DS.

Sales of books

H. R. Woudhuysen

January and February were relatively quiet months for the book auction houses with few sales taking place. March looks as though it is going to be busier. On March 5 Phillips had a small general sale with some good atlases and maps. There were three first editions in the sale; among them one with dust-wrapper of *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* (1939), estimated at £60-£80. Though not a rare book, this does not often come up at auction. From the same year, the first signed and limited edition of Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* was expected to go for as much as £800, while a slightly battered first of P. G. Wodehouse's early book *The Golden Boy* (1904), was estimated at £120-£150. One pleasing association item is worth mentioning: Aubrey Beardsley's copy of A. W. Pollard's *Early Illustrated Books* (1893), was expected to fetch between £60 and £80.

The third and fourth sessions of Sotheby's general sale of books and maps take place on March 9 and 10. The material is again fairly miscellaneous with some unusual early printed books, a further group from the library of Duff and Diana Cooper, a first edition with dust-wrapper of *Lord of the Flies* (estimate £100-£150), and a good collection of items from the Hogarth Press. Especially when they have their original wrappings (some by Vanessa Bell) these are very attractive books, which have begun to attract collectors willing to pay substantial though by no means exorbitant prices for them: by charting its productions, Clive Woolmer's *Checklist of the Hogarth Press* (originally published in 1967 and reissued this year by St Paul's Bibliographies in an enlarged

second edition) has undoubtedly encouraged enthusiasts.

Finally, on March 12 Bloomsbury Book Auctions have an all-day sale which may be of unusual interest. The oddest item in the sale is a copy of the 1905 first edition of Edgar Wallace's *The Four Just Men* which Crippen read on the Montrose while on his way to Canada. The book was later owned by the captain of the ship, who identified the previous owner, and added that the news that Crippen was reading the book greatly added to his popularity. It is expected to go for between £80-£120. The afternoon part of the sale is devoted to a very curious accumulation of books formerly owned by Eric John Duggan, whose interests extended from psychology to search to the bibliography of erotic literature. There are few outstanding items, but the collection as a whole contains some oddities which would undoubtedly be very hard to get together again: it may attract some unexpected attention from buyers interested in the odd.

Pushkin's drawings

David Budgen

Among the recent celebrations in Britain to mark the 150th anniversary of Pushkin's death in 1837 was the showing during February and March, at the National Film Theatre and elsewhere, of an enjoyable and original series of three thirty-minute films. The films *Rural Pushkin* (The Drawings of Pushkin) and *the life and works of the poet - rather in the manner of a vaguely Surrealist East European cartoon - by animating the countless doodles he found over all his manuscripts. Made with the help of the artist Yankelevsky, the film's soundtrack, consisting of a brief narrative and some of Pushkin's verse, is recited by some of the best Soviet actors - Smolotkovsky, Yevsky, and Batalin - and accompanied by the music of Schnittke.*

As Pushkin's literary executor, the poet Zhukovsky, was to discover when sifting through his papers on his death, Pushkin's manuscripts and rough drafts are a chaotic palimpsest of scratching out, corrections and deletions. Unlike those of Tolstoy or Proust where the clean rough copy is material for further, sometimes epic, insertions, Pushkin's manuscripts with their crossings-out and scribbles are the evidence of his thinking aloud: the creative workshop of an improvisator of genius.

All of them are further enlivened by an extraordinary collection of witty, elegant and, in the most part skilfully drawn, doodles illustrating the progress of the poem. This is at the more strange in a poet who is decidedly un-painterly, only rarely "visual" in the way that Pasternak are. And it is not as if, like Turgenev in his novels, Pushkin uses the image or doodle as a point of departure. Unlike the sketches of Lermontov or Hugo, who are poet-artists in their own right, Pushkin's doodles are extensions of his handwriting, laconic and witty and inseparable from the verse-line.

The idea of animating not only the doodles but the manuscripts as a whole (Pushkin's post-stroke turn into forests and fences, hillsides and rain), is both original and particularly appropriate to the skimming pace and family nature of the poetry, to its lightness and wit. Although the overall tone of the films is light-hearted (there is great play with Pushkin's drawings of ladies' feet in what Nabokov termed the "pedal digression" in *Olegin*), the main emphasis is predictably on Pushkin's humiliations at the hands of the Tsar and his minions. This theme provides some of the best passages in the films, where Pushkin and his mischievous, monkey-like *alter-ego* interact like a comic duo in an interview with Nicholas I, who acted as Pushkin's censor. One of the reasons for Pushkin's enduring popularity in the USSR is, no doubt, the lasting topicality of the theme of the artist's humiliations by the authorities.

Edible analogies

David Nokes

DENNIS POTTER
Victors
BBC2

Victors is Dennis Potter's holiday film. Released from the dark brimstone obsessions of the Forest of Dean into the sunny Umbrian countryside, he offers us, on the surface at least, a complete change of mood and style. Adapted and slimmed down from his stodgy stage-play *Sufficient Carbohydrate*, Potter's screenplay is a comedy of manners with all the verbal polish and symmetrical plotting of a Neil Simon comedy. For Michael Brandon and Glynn Barber, too, the film is a welcome break from the routine shoot-outs and car-chases of *Dempsey and Makepeace*, presenting them for once with a script in which acting is more important than accessories.

With the formulaic predictability of a sitcom of Anglo-American *mores*, two couples sharing a holiday villa, one British and one American, are deliberately contrasted. John Standing is Jack, middle-aged, English and impotent, the former owner of a long established family business. Michael Brandon is Eddie, an aggressive, athletic American whose company has recently swallowed up Jack's ailing firm. Jack's style and pyjamas are buttoned up tight: he talks in epigrams, flavouring his sentences with gin. By contrast Eddie seems over-dressed in bathing trunks, splashes about the pool like an overgrown college boy, drinks juice and talks slang. Jack's wife Elizabeth (Nicola Pagett) is dark and devious; Eddie's wife Lucy (Glynis Barber) is blonde and trusting. When the anticipated swap of partners occurs it seems to confirm Potter's delight in abandoning his usual mordant style for a pastiche of Noel Coward.

Yet beneath the sunny surface lie more familiar Potter themes. Eddie and Jack are both in the food business, and *Victors* replaces the mottled skinscapes of *The Slingshot Detective* with a bellyful of moral starch. Potter's

metaphors throughout are resolutely alimentary. Jack's penis is as limp as a stick of airline celery, "the sort that leaks into your Bloody Mary". For Eddie, Italian art cannot compensate for the backwardness of a country in which you actually have to cut the bread. Jack's grandfather sold proper food, but Eddie knows that the profits are all in the additives. As Potter runs through his list of edible analogies like a man ransacking the supermarket shelves, those old obsessions, sin and sex, reappear in the guise of fruit and veg. Humiliated and cuckolded Jack creeps through a field of rotten apples like Blake's vision of Nebuchadnezzar while Eddie's phallic stamens has all the synthetic freshness of one of his company's bananas, specially treated for extra shelf-life. Some of the film's best moments, however, occur when Potter relaxes the working of his digestive tract, for example in a scene in the garden where the two men discuss feminism. "It's all the books they read", says Jack. Meanwhile the women chat in the kitchen like parody housewives in a television advertisement.

The taut exchanges of this stereotyped quartet are filmed in a contrasting style which endeavours to suggest mystery and hallucination rather than social comedy. The director, Piers Haggard, flavours Potter's dietary satire with a cinematic sauce of Hitchcockian menace. The faces of the peasants are blank and ominous; the woods are full of noises; a dead hand trails from the back of a Fiat like an accusation. Only gradually do we come to realize that the events of the film are being conveyed to us through the disturbed imagination of the fifth member of the holiday group, that of Clayton, the teenage son of Eddie's first marriage. This narrative device seems a deliberate trick of psychological hocus-pocus. The final wonderland cliché which transforms the whole film into an adolescent fantasy of revenge is an unfortunate and implausible device which undercuts the comedy by seeking to turn it into a metaphysical game. It is as if, even on holiday, Potter cannot relax his vision of Hell's retribution. His *Midsummer Night's Dream* is merely a lucid interval in the nightmare of real life.

Calling the shots

Zachary Leader

The Color of Money
Various cinemas

Nobody today can make the screen jump and crackle like Martin Scorsese, not even the comparably kinetic Steven Spielberg. In *The Color of Money* there are moments of pure exhilaration, as astonishing as the most astonishing pool shots. The pool sequences employ techniques similar to the boxing sequences in *Raging Bull* (1980): multiple-speed cinematography, dream-like dissolves, continuous panning and dollying. The constant rush and prowl of the camera, the sharp, thunderous sound effects (and a high-powered, at times intrusive, score by Robbie Robertson), the precision and clarity of so many of the images (from the moment the film opens, with a series of super-real close-ups), all attest to Scorsese's continuing mastery as a film-maker.

But there are problems with the story. The plot concerns the corruption of a gifted young pool-player (Tom Cruise) and the redemption of his fallen corrupter, the arch-hustler and stakeholder, Fast Eddie Felson (Paul Newman). Vincent, the gifted innocent, so loves the game that he is willing to pay people in order to play it. Though at one time he too loved the game with Vincent's purity, Eddie is disgusted at such behaviour. Pool is no longer a game for him, no longer even about winning, "it's about money". When Eddie finally realizes how far he has fallen, he abandons Vincent (and the 60 per cent commission Vincent earned him), and sets out to redeem himself by becoming the best in the business once more, inevitably challenging his corrupted protégé. The film ends with their showdown at the 9-Ball Classic in Atlantic City.

Two things go wrong with the narrative: Eddie's moment of salvation is fuzzy and confusing, as though Scorsese couldn't be bothered to let it unfold properly; and the last third of the film, in which Eddie takes centre stage, is flat and hackneyed. Vincent's corruption, in which Eddie teaches him the tricks of

the hustler's trade, is itself a cliché. All the familiar ingredients are here: Vince's hating to throw a game (a motif straight out of *Raging Bull*, and *On the Waterfront* and *Champion* before it); the ins and outs of assorted scams and stings; the gathering incredulity of wizened onlookers as Vincent reels in a catch. But Scorsese and the actors take obvious pleasure in fitting these well-worn episodes to the grubby pool-hall milieu. Eddie's comeback, on the other hand, seems to have wandered on to the screen from some recent Paul Newman movie, turning *The Color of Money* into a version of *Absence of Malice* (1981) or *The Verdict* (1982), both of which involve heroic redemptions.

Scorsese claims the film isn't really a sequel, that audiences needn't have seen Newman in Robert Rossen's *The Hustler* (1961) in order to understand what's going on. But this isn't altogether true. Because it remains unclear throughout the film why Eddie left playing in the first place (the skills are all there, twenty-five years later), we're never sure what it is he has to overcome in order to be reborn. The vagueness nags and lends a windy grandiloquence to the movie. Eddie's mortification and redemption are treated in the manner of earlier and more personal Scorsese films, in which a larger religious or metaphysical dimension is implied. But in this context, with Paul Newman staring out at us with blue-eyed determination, it is impossible to take the larger theme seriously.

The Color of Money is the second film Scorsese has made since the collapse in 1984 of his attempts to finance a "Last Temptation of Christ". When the project collapsed, Scorsese turned to "simpler" and more commercial ventures. After *Hours* (1985), for example, was a marvellous maze or game of a movie with little intrusive message. *The Color of Money* seems to have been made in a similar spirit. But the old obsessions aren't dead, and they pop up here in ways that jar and confuse, turning what might have been a perfectly acceptable commercial enterprise - a well-made star vehicle - into something grander and more ambitious, and in the end less satisfying.

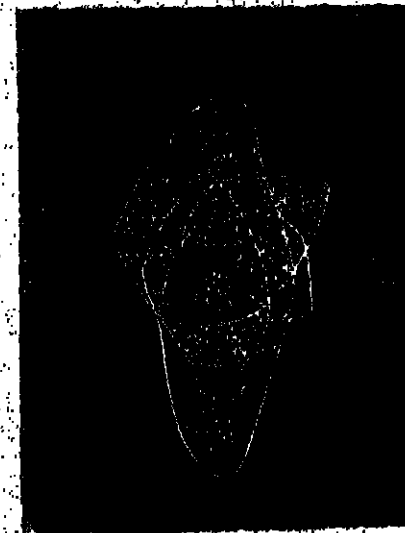
The materials of the modern world

Lynne Cooke

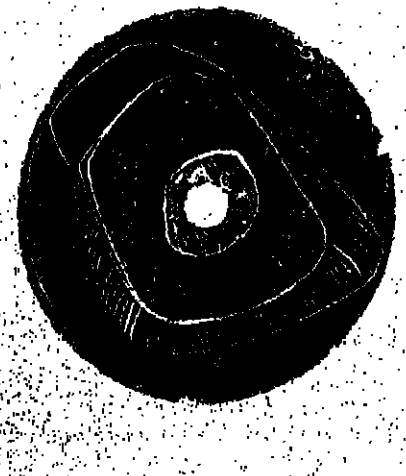
Naum Gabo: Sixty Years of Constructivism
Tate Gallery, until April 20

What makes the current Naum Gabo retrospective at the Tate Gallery so memorable is not only its breadth (over a hundred works plus archival material which usefully demonstrates something of his methods, with models, templates and sketches) but the inclusion of a group of sculptures which have just been "discovered". The result is the fullest account yet available of the work of this artist.

Gabo entitled his first manifesto in 1920 "Realistic Manifesto", and realistic art was his goal for the next fifty years of his career. He argued that twentieth-century modern reality could not be expressed by mimetic styles: "Space and time are the only elements of real life. In order to correspond to life art must therefore refer to these elements." By addressing these notions, Gabo claimed, the artist avoids subjectivism and individuality in favour of "what the collective mind of his time feels and aspires towards, but cannot yet express". Published in Moscow, this aesthetic credo bore the imprint of the fervent debates of artists like Tatlin and Rodchenko concerning the nature of a socially responsible and socially engaged art, as well as showing traces of certain of Gabo's formative experiences, which included a training in medicine, the sciences and engineering, and exposure to vanguard currents in contemporary art in Paris and elsewhere. Essentially self-taught as a sculptor, from the outset Gabo demonstrated his concern to open the mass of the object to space; and to construct the form from the materials of the modern world, notably sheet metal or plastic, as can be seen in this exhibition. In "Constructed Head" (1916, one of his earliest extant



Two wood-engravings from a portfolio of twelve by Naum Gabo, from the exhibition reviewed here.



works. Rapidly finding himself at odds both with the Constructivists' belief in working directly with industry, the media and manufacturing, and with the socialist realist art that officialdom began to champion as the accredited mode, Gabo left Russia in 1922, settling first in Germany, then Paris and, later, England before finally moving to the United States in 1946. If these wanderings seem to have impinged little on his aesthetic, which he continued to develop and refine throughout his life, they do reflect the difficulties he faced for years in realizing large-scale works and securing public projects. In the interim, period, proposals for monumental public sculpture gradually replaced those hypothetical schemes for buildings, towers and other types of visionary architecture which he devised along with other artists and architects of the time. Science re-

mained the source and stimulus for much of his art, but in the 1930s his vocabulary widened to incorporate forms derived from biological patterns and formations, which show an affinity with the biomorphism of a number of erstwhile Surrealists. In England his tendency to fuse aspects of Surrealism and Abstraction proved particularly fertile; and it was in this sympathetic atmosphere that he produced some of the finest works of his mid-career. He continued to maintain strong contacts with Britain until his death in 1977, and as late as 1976 undertook a commission for a public fountain, "Torision", at St Thomas's Hospital, recently restored to working order.

Although a great deal of Gabo's output was stored in his studio during his lifetime, only recently has a full-scale inventory been undertaken. Numerous treasures have been unearthed, including the cardboard maquette for the

metal version of "Constructed Torso", of 1917-18, long believed to be lost. Many others have also been reassembled for the first time for this exhibition. The layout of the show cleverly exploits the potential of the Tate's new extension. Although hung chronologically, the exhibition avoids linearity through the use of a series of interconnected spaces which unfold into each other, displaying Gabo's tireless permutation of themes, motifs and forms throughout his career.

In addition to sculpture and related drawings, the show includes a selection of Gabo's prints, his most successful venture into two-dimensional work. In these he extended his language in new but related images which clearly defy three-dimensional execution; at the same time they embody a sensitivity to material and process that the later, large sculptures do not always retain.

The substantial catalogue is a welcome addition to the Gabo literature, for the painstaking work of a number of scholars excises or corrects numerous errors and misconceptions which have long surrounded the sculptor's life and œuvre. In addition to two general essays there is a much-needed biographical study and an invaluable catalogue *raisonné* of the constructions and sculptures.

Naum Gabo: Monoprints by Graham Williams, with an introduction by Christina Lodder and Martin Hammer (72pp. Florin Press, Weaver's Cot, Cot Lane, Biddenden, Kent TN27 8JB. £8. 0 9067 1515 6) has been published to coincide with the exhibition *Naum Gabo: wood-engravings and related graphics*, which is at Kettle's Yard, Castle Street, Cambridge CB3 0AQ from March 7 to April 26. *Naum Gabo: Sixty Years of Constructivism*, edited by Steven Nash and John Morket, is published by Prestel (272pp. Paperback £12.95. 0 960 9622 7).

ALAN BATES JULIE ANDREWS
DUET for ONE
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Enigmatic powers

Lachlan Mackinnon

ROY FULLER
Consolations
56pp. Secker and Warburg. £5.95.
0-336 16791 3

The Ruined Boys
248pp. Hogarth. £4.95.
0 7012 0691 8
Image of a Society
239pp. Hogarth. £4.95.
0 7012 0689 6

"Approaching my fortieth birthday", Roy Fuller wrote in his much-anthologized "Translation".

I will stop expressing my belief in the rosy future of man, and accept the evidence of a couple of wretched wars and innumerable abortive revolutions.

"Rosy" suggests the Marxist sympathies of his youth, by renouncing which Fuller seemed to align himself with the ostensibly diminished expectations and reactionary gloom of the Movement, leaving behind the styles and hopes of the Auden generation. Nothing so simple: the poem in fact has a delighted hubbubness. The publication of a new volume, *Consolations*, together with the reissue of two novels, celebrates the seventy-fifth birthday of this increasingly prolific, increasingly valued poet.

Fuller started playing the old buffer young, and only as he has aged has his voice moved towards a thoroughly earned authority, most notably perhaps in *Subsequent to Summer* (1985), where he can write a descriptive piece and end wryly

The sort of poem old Allen Tate alleged I could write with one hand tied behind my back.

The gift of descriptive phrase-making remains in *Consolations*, still to be rebuked on occasion, as in "Tea-Time":

I see the legs of sparrows pink against
The sun. The usual Coleridgean tone.

Mostly, however, this book is witty rather than visual, a demonstration that Fuller can now write about anything at all with a self-aware dottiness licensed by his affected withering. For instance, in "Currying Favour":

I feel initially suspicious dogs
(Tied up outside the supermarket store)
With "Good Boy" vitaminized chocolate drops.

"Surely" it is not the fear of God's judgment, "Retained from indoctrination when a child" that makes him do this:

Besides, in almost every other way
Old age is famous for its selfishness;
And it may well be, having lost one's looks,
One tries to get in even dogs' good books.

The pleasure this gives comes not just from the way the form is coiled to be sprung, but from the pun which brings back from the margin the fear of what happens after death.

There is an appealing variety—in form, content and length—of poems here. There are several brief squibs, a number of domestic vignettes which are by turns comic and sad, a section of "Tenners" (poems of ten lines) over a wide emotional range, and some dramatic monologues. Of the latter, the most striking is "The Marcellus Version", which laments the printing of *Hamlet* from "the bard's foul papers": "Proliferating fumes / Of the sack-soaked lunatic poet in his study!" because

In Preston or, indeed, the City they'd
Have missed the author's original traffic, yawned
At the colling of his sub-plot.

Leafing through the "folio . . ." By Shakeshaft", the old, disgruntled actor sounds quite philistine until his monologue nears its end:

Bloody cold,
He made it feel on the battlements, admitted.
And by-the-by, even in mid-career
He didn't always get the lines right.
Give me the tome again. Look here, for instance:
'Touching this dreaded sight twice seen of us.'
Somehow you've got to stress the 'twice' and 'us'
To bring the sense home; yet speak trippingly.

Fuller gives the character his own prosodic feel, and the apparent pedantry bears thinking about, for the old ham may be deaf to variety but he understands the problems of speaking verse.

"To bring the sense home" might be the motto of all three books under review. *The Ruined Boys* (first published in 1959) takes every cliché of the public-school novel and pursues it to its awful, hilarious conclusion. Mr Pemberton, the headmaster, may owe something to Forster's Mr Pembroke, but Gerald Bracher's moral education is the undoing of fairyland by its own axioms. *Image of a Society* (first published in 1956) takes another closed world, the building society, and contrives to be riveting, despite the rather unconvincing central love-affair. Fuller makes the trivia of his own profession fascinating, and his sense of the corrosive power of institutions, their warping of creative instincts, burns through the grimy surface realism. Although the writer-lawyer (like Fuller), Philip Wit, is a figure of fun, his Marxist analysis of the power-relations that building societies encapsulate suggests that the angry young Fuller never wholly disappeared, and is as true now as then.

That truthfulness is seen also in "Ward IG", the most touching piece in *Consolations*. The poet sets his video-recorder and visits his wife in hospital. "I can die happy, as it were, / Now you've revived the cliché that life would lack // Meaning without you." He comes home across the heath,

And gratitude to enigmatic powers,
Malevolent on the whole, wells up, as I
Return to music's marvels, while you lie
Rather too closely still to the realms of Dis.

The restrained passion reminds us that *Consolations* can only be provisional: this is not Fuller's strongest collection, but there is enough here to rescue our gratitude for the poet's gift of words.

A stowaway in nature

Grevel Lindop

TED HUGHES
Flowers and Insects
With drawings by Leonard Baskin
61pp. Faber. £7.95.
0571133177

Though its title might seem to invite comparison with Lawrence's *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, Ted Hughes's *Flowers and Insects* is in reality rather a slight production, and it is not strengthened by Leonard Baskin's amiable but lifeless watercolours.

The basic project of the volume—seventeen meditations on the forms, the being and doing of a range of wild plants, insects, birds and spiders—recalls the Hughes of "Pike", "Thrushes" and "View of a Pig". The poems themselves, however, show far less patient attention to their objects than did those early pieces and far more readiness to appropriate them as pretexts for impatient flourishes of coarse-grained rhetoric. Often Hughes seems to be peering the target, unwilling to tilt his images or think through their implications. Honey-suckle flowers, under this régime, become

Hot and tipsy . . . their dark burgundy flushes
Already silted a little
As each one dips her neck through our exclamations,
And opens a gentle hebra
To sip human dreams,
Lips parted, a filament of salmon
Between the tongue and the teeth, a child's eye in a woman's body.

This little rhubarb dragon,
This viper in the leaves . . .

There is a certain imagistic vitality, but no attempt at concentration or integration.

In the "animal" poems, Hughes's failure to come to terms with the otherness of his subject-matter is indicated by a prevalence of mechanical imagery. As a term device, "a triggered magnet / Connects him downward", a spider's claws are "like the mechanical hands / That manipulate radio-active matter / On the other side of safe screen glass"; the grasshopper is "a wicker contraption, with working parts". Some of these images are apt, but cumulatively they generate a sense of deadness and suggest that the poet is cherishing a subtle dislike of his material.

Hughes's view of his flowers is more dispiriting still. The iris is seen as epitomizing "The womb's temptation and offer", which is defined as

A surrender
Of torn mucous membranes, veined and purpled,
A translucence of internal organs
In a frisson.

The spindle of meaning

Tim Dooley

JON SILKIN
The Ship's Pasture
93pp. Routledge and Kegan Paul. £4.95.
0710208413

"I searched / the mind's oceanic magma for congealed / recognizable substance, muck, / for a spindle of meaning." These lines, from "Under a Lamp", give the flavour of Jon Silkin's recent work and suggest some of the problems involved in responding to it. The poems in *The Ship's Pasture*, Silkin's ninth collection, are slippery yet substantial, characterized by sinuous syntax and sinewy diction. They eschew pleasurable local effects in favour of a sustained seriousness, an interrogation of experience that is insistent and cyclical. Exploring the history of the diaspora, the life in the shipyards of the North-East or his childhood as an evacuee in Wales, Silkin focuses (in Hughes's words) on all that "is seared with trade, / bleared / smeared with toil; / And wears man's / smudge and shares man's smell." Silkin's language lacks Hopkins's musicality but has a similar clotted and purposeful density.

Autumn with gifts, they labour between
their ridges topped, layered over mounds
of untraced mud, the mud-dove's parallel
will-swinging trout and salmon, the diffused

Turn open,
The core debauched,
All loosely dangling helplessness . . .
Delicately holding herself
As if every edge were cringing round a nerve.

A foxglove is "Flushed, freckled with emb-f fever, / Swollen lips parted, her eyes closing, / A lolling armful, and so young! Hot / Among the insane spiders." Himalayan balsam reminds Hughes of "a child bride . . . Over-painted by temple harlots"; a rhododendron is an "excess crumple of lips / shadowed with bloodier darkness, / A cry from deep in the plant, hurting the throat and the mouth helplessly open".

Granted that hunting and reproduction are central to the world's Hughes is describing, it still seems crudely reductive to impose, so repeatedly, human forms of mechanism and sexual sadism on to them. At times Hughes seems to be free-associating, caring hardly at all for the relevance of his metaphors. Thus snodrops are "Waiting to be freed, / As 19th Century vicarage maidens . . . all Cordelias, / Or else all green-veined Gonerils / Under the empty frenzy of hoar-frost". What kind of sensibility is it which slides so aimlessly from the perfunctory stereotype of the "vicarage maidens" to Cordelias and then to Gonerils?

From these strictures, two poems should broadly be exempted. One is "Eclipse", an account of the mating of spiders, which, despite the alienating effect of its sometimes mechanical imagery, does convey a genuine curiosity about the life-form it observes. It also holds back until its last line the revelation that the mating, with its mysterious and perilous balance between male and female, has been taking place on a windowpane during a solar eclipse: a detail which opens up enticing depths of symbolic resonance. The other is "The Honey Bee", which, though it gives no explicit indication, must surely be an elegy for Sylvia Plath, written almost in her own manner (there is a quite specific echo of Plath's "The Bee Meeting" in "Two Tortoiseshell Butterflies" earlier in the volume).

Hughes's honey bee is beautifully, frustratingly self-absorbed and right: she "Can't be taught a thing, / Like the sun, she's on course forever, / As if nothing else at all existed / Except her flowers". Her perception of the world is as "A flying carpet of flowers"—or, perhaps, of potential poems: "a pattern / Coming and going—very loosely woven— / Out of which she works her solutions". The bee-keeper (Mun? Death?), with his "gloves of shadow", stickily biots the sun but remains outside her consciousness. "Though he's a stowaway on her carpet of colour-waves / And drinks her sums".

The poignancy, tact and humour of the poem indicate just what is lacking from most of the volume. It is a relief to know that Hughes has not lost his capacity for this kind of writing.

Sea people, land people

Tim Armstrong

KERI HULME
The Windwater / Te Kaihau
240pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £10.95.
0340401745
MAURICE SHADBOLT
Season of the Jew
384pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £10.95.
0340399317

A character in one of Keri Hulme's short stories says, "I have a theory about deformities. People are either fearful in the company of a monster, or they will worship it." We might take this as a comment on Hulme's own work. There can be few other writers of undoubted power whose work is so full of deformity, both as subject matter and in style. The body-count in these stories includes three amputations, one skull-crushing, a mass dismembering, infanticide, three fatal accidents and a riot. The theme of children who are abused or abandoned, familiar from *The Bone People*, is present in many of the stories. So too are the stylistic grotesqueries and over-writing of that novel: dialogue no one would ever speak, gothic nonsense about Ancient Ones, anthropomorphic musings on the "sea people" (whales).

Those stories which seem to be apprentice-work written in imitation of Ian McEwan and others are poor, but in other stories Hulme mixes delicate questions of class and culture in New Zealand in a way that no other writer has before. Her characters often speak in a half-literate post-1960s argot which we recognize as real. It is often the speech of the margins we hear of bikers, hippies, right-wing thugs. The best of the stories have an admirable sharpness of social observation. Those about trust and betrayal of trust are particularly striking: "While My Guitar Gently Sings" describes the hopes a Maori family places on a daughter, and her failure; "He Tauware Kawa, He Kawa Tauware" concerns a disappointment in an attempt at cultural revival; "A Nightsong for the Shining Cuckoo" points a moral about how to treat the crippled. "The Cicadas of Summer" succeeds in grafting a Mansfield-like evocation of childhood on to a horror story, and "Hooks and Feelers" deals with the aftermath of yet another amputation. Of the pieces dealing with middle-class life, "Kiteflying Party at Doctor's Point" succeeds best, though it has an unnecessarily contrived ending. The overall impression created by this volume is of a writer of real ability who is beginning to control her craft and extend her range.

Maurice Shadbolt's latest work is another big New Zealand novel (one of a number in recent years: Hulme, Ian Wedde and Witi Ihimaera, among others, have all combined elements of Pacific mythology—Maori, whaling—with a concern for national identity). *Season of the Jew* covers some of the same ground as Ihimaera's *The Matriarch*, published last year: the Te Kooti uprisings of the 1860s. But where Ihimaera's modernist technique allowed for the layering of historical documents and polemic, Shadbolt opens with an authorial note stating bluntly that "most of this happened, and much in the manner described".

That is debatable. The story of the prophet Te Kooti and the Maori tribe of Israel which he proclaimed is presented through the experience of George Fairweather, an officer in the Imperial forces who resigns, becomes a painter, and then is drawn into the Poverty Bay rebellion. Fairweather begins as a thorough cynic, a chocolate-cream soldier (his taste for Shavian aphorism never entirely leaves him), but gradually his ironic façade is broken down. His attempts to blunt the efforts of the land-hungry colonists to persecute the prophet fail. When things turn nasty with the infamous Matawhero massacre and the rape of his Maori lover (later his wife), he abandons his doctrine of "never mind" and becomes Te Kooti's most zealous pursuer.

The story of the military campaigns in the difficult interior is vividly told, and culminates in the counter-massacre at Ngatapa, where Te Kooti's male followers are slaughtered by the Maori militia of Major Kopapa. The remainder of the novel deals with the fate of the one person Fairweather manages to save at Ngatapa, a Maori boy called Hamiora Pere. Pere becomes a scapegoat, and despite Fairweather's efforts, is tried and hanged by an establishment keen to make an example of him.

A historical note tells us that the book is partly an attempt to appease the ghost of the forgotten Hamiora, just as the author's surrogate in the novel assures the boy that his name will be famous: "You are no more a *tuhua*. Never, never a nothing." Despite the best intentions and the historical understanding of the novelist, the false note in all this is obvious. History is packaged as individual experience and the "rescue" of Hamiora Pere. The European struggle for Maori land is naturalized in terms of Fairweather's gradual acceptance of his role in the province (having mocked the colonists, he becomes a landowner). The reader's own experience follows the same trajectory: irony, horror, involvement and resolution. And in the end, the novel, for all its competence and interest, too readily seems like another tract of territory inherited (after due process) from the past. These problems have never been more contentious in New Zealand cultural life, but in Shadbolt's novel the liberal interpretation of history triumphs once again.

Cooper's view of tribal hierarchy seems close to the Shakespearean idea of the body politic: when the head is disturbed, every part is affected. Just as Theuda is driven by forces beyond his control, so the patriarchal elders are subjected to the newly developed force of the women who demand an equal say in tribal matters and, in a thoroughly modern way, withhold their labour.

The *Horn Fellow* examines the eternal problems of power and love between men and women, but chooses to do so in a displaced, although entirely credible environment. The sense of uprooting is heightened by Cooper's dynamic and luminous use of language, by his persistent use of phrases whereby even inert objects are given active power. At times this technique works too well and one loses sight of what is being described. At others, the language is clear and the narrative appears too gung-ho and clear and the narrative appears too slight and inconsequential for the treatment it receives. When the balance is right, as it mostly is, the *Horn Fellow* is a gem to live.

Cooper brings Theuda to the village where he is accepted into the community, which worships a deer-god—the Horn Fellow—and whose chief is called the Tineman, literally the man at the point of the antler. Cooper brings this community to life as Theuda quickly establishes himself within the all-male elite of the tribe—when Deor becomes Tineman, Theuda is appointed heir, or tantist, and is acknowledged as a wordspeaker, one through whom

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Buckling a swash

Peter Reading

STEPHEN MARLOWE
The Memoirs of Christopher Columbus
569pp. Cape. £10.95.
0224024132

Sooner or later some well-meaning critic is bound to ask, "Are you writing an autobiography, a historical novel, a romance or what?" forecasts Stephen Marlowe as Columbus two-thirds of the way through his long (but not boring) book. At the most immediate level, Columbus's chronicles, from childhood to senility (swashbuckling evagation, a bit of rogering *en route*, the vagaries of blood-curdling political history) are definitely material for picaresque.

For reasons suggested later, Cristóbal Colón, Admiral of the Ocean Sea and Viceroy and Governor of the Indies, charts his lifetime's adventures from a late-twentieth-century vantage-point. Accordingly, a not unamusing anachronistic US linguistic camp is employed—"Don't sell yourself cheap, it's bad for your image. Say, ten per cent. And you'll want to be appointed viceroy and governor." "I will?" "You bet your ass you will."

Fifteenth-century observations assume modern relevance. At Cape St Vincent, Henry the Navigator's adjutant peruses a map delineating Ireland the Great: "As the navigational heir to Prince Henry he knew Ireland to be a tea-ridden island west of far England, populated by religious zealots since the fifth century." Depiction of post-War of the Roses England also manages to be prophetic: "On the streets an olfactory disaster from tanneries and pigsties, impromptu latrines and discharged chamber pots . . . each man policed his own space as best he could. Death by violence left rotting corpses in random corners."

Marlowe is enabled not only to play games supplementing the historical and biographical record (as when he attributes to Colón bitter

resentment of "that crass eponymous opportunist" Amerigo Vespucci—"Not that I'm miffed. What's in a name?"), but also to supply humanitarian commentary on historical events, notably on Spanish maltreatment of Indians and the atrocities of the Inquisition. Uncomfortably familiar racism is rife among the colonists—"it's well known that they [the indigenous] don't feel anything. Probably, like three-toed sloths or caterpillars, they aren't even aware of their own existence." These insensitive natives, squashed into a hold for shipment to Spain as slaves, are seasick, "have vomited on themselves and each other . . . flesh rubbed raw by manacles and fetters . . . urine dripping from higher to lower planks . . . baby slaves smeared with feces".

Back home in Valencia, Columbus casts a disparaging eye over a bout of public garroting and burning-alive by the Supreme and General Council of the Inquisition, and later, in Toledo, pays a Dantesque visit (guided by Brother Virgilio) to the various torture departments of the Palace of the Inquisition ("Soon the oil began to sizzle, then the flesh, but as the objects were gagged, their voices did not rise much above the fluttering roar of the fire.")

At its most portentous level, the novel implies that Columbus is a variant of the Wandering Jew (the apparent immortality of the narrator corroborates this, as does his tortuous dream where the Archbishop of Armenia tells Roger Wendover of St Albans about one Cartaphilus, map-lover, doomed to roam until the return of Christ . . .). But this is the least interesting aspect of a work in which, through storm and calm, a New (or Other) World is discovered, cigars and syphilis are introduced to Europe, and a human being experiences the deaths of loved ones and the loss of youth.

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Poetry Book Society

Cash in on poetry

Poor little rich belles

John Melmoth

ELLEN GILCHRIST
Drunk with Love
239pp. Faber. £9.95.
0571 146716

A number of Ellen Gilchrist's new stories require us to accept that things go harder for the rich and pampered than they do for the rest of us, that it is more painful to be loaded but miss out on that final, essential 1 per cent than it is to be used to having nothing in the first place. The fact, for example, that Sally in "The Blue-Eyed Buddha" is dying of kidney failure is supposed to be more poignant because she is leaving behind lobster suppers and cruises around the Virgin Islands. Gilchrist's poor little rich girls certainly take it to heart when reality fails to conform to their requirements.

Other stories make the opposite, more prosaic and obvious point that things are never so bad if one is able to cry all the way to the tennis/ yacht/bridge/supper club. In the title-story life seems meaningless to Freddy because Nora Joan does not love him; all he is left with are the trivial consolations of yuppie-dom – a beautiful house, paintings, books, friends, other women. If, as in the adolescent Rhoda's case, "The Expansion of the Universe" requires one to leave school and social triumphs in Harrisburg, Illinois and move to Franklin, Kentucky where everything that makes life worth living will have to be fought for again.

Fightin' an' feudin'

David Montrose

RICHARD RUSSO
Mohawk
418pp. Heinemann. £10.95.
0434659053
CATHIE PELLETIER
The Funeral Makers
286pp. Viking. £10.95.
0670810763

Small-town USA (North-eastern variety) is the milieu for each of these first novels. Richard Russo's *Mohawk* is a declining leather town in upstate New York, Cathie Pelletier's *Mattagash* a lumber town whose rusticity and isolation are exceptional even by the standards of backwoods Maine. The similarities do not end there. Both novels are preoccupied with ties of blood and emotion. They share, too, a structure which intersperses the central plot with scenes from their characters' personal histories.

Set in 1967, the opening section of *Mohawk* revolves around the mysterious bond between two antithetical old men: upright Mather Grouse, a retired leather-cutter in precarious health; and Rory Gaffney, a detested one-time workmate who has long exerted a baneful influence on his life. Gaffney is the father of the "town moron", Wild Bill, fifteen years earlier a normal teenager (with a crush on Mather's daughter, Anne) until "damaged" in an unexplained "accident". The clarification of these interconnected enigmas proceeds slowly, impeded as it is by the regular introduction of fresh characters – notably Mrs Grouse and Anne's son, Randall – and the piecemeal exploration of relationships past and present: between Mather and Anne; between Anne and her ex-husband, Dallas; between Anne and her cousin's wheelchair-bound husband, Dan, whom she adored even before she married; between Dallas and his brother's widow.

This peripheral abundance is all to the good, however, since the enigmas jointly prove something of a damp squib when unfolded early in the second part of the novel (the first having ended with Mather's funeral). The action has jumped five years; the focus switches to Randall, now a college dropout and dodger of the Vietnam draft. Circumstances equip him to exact unbloody vengeance against Rory on his grandfather's behalf; but at the climax of the novel – enacted, melodramatically, during a thunderstorm – the scheme goes haywire in a fashion that leads to three corpses and Randall's wrongful arrest for murder. Things end

one's material status helps – "It had better be a big house . . . It had better be the biggest house in that goddam town."

Either way, there is no nonsense about money not making any difference. Loot is the primary fact of life for the majority of Gilchrist's characters; it both shapes and inhibits their development. The possession of money may not consort easily with maturity, but there is no denying that it improves the appetite. Gilchrist's women are activated by an insouciant, piratical rapaciousness which blurs the distinction between being drunk with love, drunk with power and just drunk. Rhoda is the paradigmatic case; in "Adoration", the iron willpower of the spoilt brat emerges as an almost mystical determination not to miscarry during her "ecstatic pregnancy". When Mrs Beadle in "The Young Man" wants a toy boy she orders one from a mail order catalogue. When he proves beautiful but dull she trades him for a woman with "long legs and a long waist. A singing voice. Piano skills." Her conception of what is due to her *amour propre* is nothing if not precise.

The instinct to devour everything that is put in front of them explains why so many of these Missouri belles become drunks or dieters. When Crystal starts drinking again, in "Tracelen at Dawn", she silences the housekeeper's protests with a peroration on the importance of getting satisfaction: "I am going to die when all this is over . . . And I have not had my share of the stuff . . . I am tired of being hungry. To hell with it. I'm starving to death for

sunniily, however. Randall avoids both gaol and those sent to claim him for Uncle Sam, while Anne also escapes, severing the twin strings that bind her to Mohawk – love for Dan and filial duty – and lighting out for a new start in distant Phoenix.

Throughout its first section especially, *Mohawk* is an accomplished piece of fictional architecture, while the characterization is rarely less than competent (it is striking only in the case of Mrs Grouse, a domestic tyrant inexplicably determined to eradicate earthworms from her lawn). The novel's situations, though, often have a touch, occasionally more than a touch, of soap opera about them: strangely, considering Russo's status as the *Gravite* publisher's realist. But then the *incisive* prose associated with the genre is also absent. So, too, is the conclusion: at 406 pages, *Mohawk*'s mainstream realism is decidedly overblown.

In *The Funeral Makers*, it is the summer of 1959. Marge, eldest of the three McKinnon sisters, descendant of Mattagash's founding fathers, is on her death-bed. Already at her side, the youngest sister, Sicily, who never left Mattagash either, alerts the third, Pearl, who lives in a more populous corner of the state. Pearl sets out for home, along with husband (Marvin Sr), son (Marvin Jr), daughter-in-law (Thelma) and grandchildren. On the road, mishaps beset the family: squabbles, accidents, a mislaid child. Arriving at their destination, the two Marys (undertakers both) busy themselves, a mite predictably, arranging "Mattagash's finest send-off" while awaiting

A plague on their houses

Allison Hughes

MARK CHILDRESS
A World Made of Fire
271pp. Macmillan. £3.95.
0340 402152

Strange kin to Faulkner and Alice Walker, Mark Childress's *A World Made of Fire* reverberates in the mind like few recent novels. Firmly set in a forgotten corner of the southern United States in the decade 1909-1918, the book draws its strength from the dialects of the region's people, white and black. "Rabbit run over your grave?" they ask. "Oo wee, Devil Doubt, how jump up and run out?" chants the ancient midwife, Little Brown Mary, leading her husband, Little Brown Mary, to the funeral home. Childress has succeeded in re-animating a vanished culture and in vanishing the modern and, in doing so, has written an arresting and powerful novel.

everything I need."

Gilchrist has doubtless discovered by now that being endlessly compared with Carson McCullers and Tennessee Williams can pall. None the less, she is self-consciously a Southern writer, and never more so than when she exploits the vein of steamy gothic that follows the course of the Mississippi. In "Memphis", Katherine Louise ("Baby Kate") challenges her kind's taboos against miscegenation. She is fascinated by her black lover's "size. His power, his hands, feet, mouth, dick, all that stuff." That matters will end tragically is never in doubt; like a modern Desdemona she does little to defend herself. Her aunt acknowledges that Baby's death is what the genre demands: "Anybody in my family could tell a version of this. This is the real story. Of whiskey and slaves and bored women and death."

Drunk With Love fixes a talent to provoke in the process of being house-trained; the stories are not as nasty, funny or sexy as their predecessors. Even violent death is not what it was. Baby Kate's lover dispatches her with a good clean break of the spine, whereas in the earlier "Suicides" Philip went to work on himself with half the contents of a hardware store – "He bought saws and ice picks and hammers and knives and staplers and drills." The collection creates a sense of *déjà vu*, of things done well because they have been done before. The return appearances of Nora Joan and Rhoda reinforce this sense of familiarity, which compromises Gilchrist's more over-wrought effects.

Marge's expiration: "It really helps to have a head start like this . . . Most people don't know one of their loved ones has died until the very last minute . . ."

This no doubt sounds distinctly reminiscent of Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying*, but Cathie Pelletier's story uses farce rather than grim humour. Uncomic relief occurs principally, in a subplot, through characters saddened by thwarted ambition: Ed, Sicily's alcoholic husband, whom she tricked into marriage, and Violet, a middle-aged "modern dancer" (ie stripper). A second subplot concerns the affair between Sicily's pudgy nymphomane of a daughter, Amy Joy, and one Chester Lee Gifford, a member of the clan who, in local society, have traditionally been the dregs to the McKinnons' cream. Sicily and Thelma also become acquainted (the former willingly, the latter unwillingly) with Gifford's concubine before the novel culminates, like *Mohawk*, in triple loss of life: Ed (suicide), Gifford (car crash) and Marge, whose demise has finally been precipitated by the intrusion of Pearl's obnoxious grandson, garbed as "a miniature Batman", into her room.

The Funeral Makers is an altogether leaner and sharper novel than *Mohawk*. Pelletier's farce, while hardly inspired, is deftly executed, and if its victims are two-dimensional, they are not really required to be otherwise. Polganancy, too, is deployed with a sure hand – except in the two closing chapters, where mawkishness gains the ascendancy. Time, I think, to bring out that dread epithet, "promising."

"swear", "sick", "sign" – each time with the meaning subtly twisted and the emotion heightened, until the atmosphere of doom becomes unbearable and the characters' minds crack.

The plot is pure Southern gothic, involving doubtful paternity, the burning down of an ancestral home, racial tension and vigilantes, an epidemic blamed on a wild crippled boy, and a girl-heroine who gains maturity by resisting him. But after almost 200 mesmerizing pages, tapped by a rousing funeral oration on the significance of mysteries in everyday life, the story succumbs to sentimentality and senseless violence. The epidemic simply fades away, and the theme of the scapegoat becomes anamorphic a vanished culture and its vanishing. Still, Childress has succeeded in re-animating a vanished culture and in vanishing the modern and, in doing so, has written an arresting and powerful novel.

Young Americans

Roz Kaveney

JAMES ATLAS
The Great Pretender
239pp. Viking. £10.95.
0670 81461 X
PETER J. SMITH
Highlights of the Off-Season
344pp. Chatto and Windus. £10.95.
07011 31918

James Atlas's first novel is full of period detail and has an occasional period charm, which might derive from the conscientious application of memory to the recreation of a 1960s adolescence, but could equally well mean that – once again – diaries have been recycled. Inasmuch as he grows up at all, Ben James does so in Evanston, Illinois, and under constant pressure to be a serious intellectual from a doctor father who reads James Joyce aloud at dinner in an attempt to make his wife worthy of him. Ben shares with his father the general sense that life is about being a contributor to *Partisan Review*, but is also rather interested in getting laid and having a good time; in its backs *The Great Pretender* is moderately amusing, and occasionally moving, on the subject of trying to have your cake and eat it too. It is also, however, too obviously the sort of novel that its young hero is going to grow up and write: riddled with set-pieces of a rather predictable kind. In the funeral scene, for example, Ben's reactions are decent and humane, taking on board the feelings about tradition and continuity and change appropriate to a civilized person at such a time. His feelings are thoroughly gone through and thoroughly conventional; and conventional is the most apt word for this decent and rather dull novel.

On the way, there is much to enjoy: Ben's progress through high school, university and postgraduate work at Oxford is presented with a minimum of fuss; his sexual initiation and prudent avoidance of wilder shores – a threesome with his girlfriend's best friend, and having his hair stroked by Jean Genet – are got through no less expeditiously. If the earliest notation of his mental life rarely achieves a pitch of intellectual passion, it carefully avoids any hint of purple or pretentiousness. There are a few moments of real wit, as when Ben is arrested and held overnight for drunken driving, and knows that there will be nothing he can do to prevent his father describing the incident as Kafkaesque. There is a slight surprise in the hindsight that allows a supposedly reformed present-day Ben to rebuke his younger self for the sexism of the main narrative, but smugness, in the end, is an intrinsic part of the novel's general atmosphere of earnest and continuous self-improvement.

There is no hint of any desire for self-improvement at any point in *Highlights of the Off-Season*, whose anti-hero, Sam, is quite smug about being a spoiled brat – and to some extent endearingly so. The only thing he has in common with Atlas's Ben is that both are young, American and male, and that both receive, early in their respective tales, a not especially welcome present of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall* (Sam disposes of the books as quickly as he can, albeit in what he represents to himself as a moment of absentmindedness). Sam is the sort of boy who is always being thrown out of private schools for mayhem or indolence and always reckons that it seemed a good idea at the time. Exiled to the UK, Sam embarks on his air-fare and goes to Cape Cod to see an aunt, with whom he quarrels about the casting of Bogart's movies. In a mood of domestic high dudgeon, he returns to New York, where he is incarcerated briefly in a mental hospital.

Stendhal this isn't, though there is something moderately gleeful in Sam's celebration of intelligent worthlessness. Some of the set-pieces here at least have the virtue of originality – notably in the New Year's Eve scene as Sam's drunken godfather's carver animates a vanished culture and its vanishing. Still, Childress has succeeded in re-animating a vanished culture and in vanishing the modern and, in doing so, has written an arresting and powerful novel.

Of truth and half-truth

Robin Robbins

FRANCIS BACON
The Essays
Edited by John Pitcher
270pp. Penguin. Paperback, £3.95.
0140432167
The Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall
Edited by Michael Kiernan
457pp. Oxford: Clarendon Press. £35.
0198126441
ALFRED DODD
Francis Bacon's Personal Life-Story
580pp. Rider. £12.95.
0126 12602

"Truth" and "law" are terms equally often at the tip of Bacon's pen in his *Essays or Counsels, Civill and Morall*, as he entitled the final expanded version of 1625. John Pitcher in his introduction to the Penguin edition of the *Essays* thus rightly emphasizes the establishment of truth as Bacon's lifelong profession, from the third speech of the 1592 entertainment for Elizabeth I, *A Conference of Pleasure* (given in an appendix) – "the sovereignty of man lieth hidden in knowledge" – to the 1625 essay "Of Truth", in which truth's enquiry, knowledge, and belief are proclaimed "the sovereign good of human nature". And, as Pitcher points out, the essay begins with Pilate, frantically sceptical, judging Christ, and ends with Christ's return to judge an earth in which no faith will be found, thus intertwining the scientific truth of sense, the legal truth of reason, and the religious truth of belief.

Pitcher's judicious discussion of Bacon's use of the closed fist of logic and the open hand of rhetoric leads him to characterize Bacon's writing as "a rhetorical activity as much as a scientific one, the naming of things unimaginable (or unrevealed) as much as the description of real things . . . rhetoric and science are always in collusion". Thus, while Bacon claims to be concerned more with things than with words, in the end, "with no mathematics and very little practical experience, his genius could really only fulfil itself in words". On the credit side, Pitcher argues, Bacon's figures of speech for his ideas (or rather the ideas of pre-Socratic philosophers, such as the "dry light" of Heraclitus – in the received mistranslation – or "truth's deep well" of Democritus) "are very close to scientific hypothesis, the faculty of theory which Bacon is often accused of having undervalued". On the debit side is the writer's occasional falling into the very trap he denounced in *The Advancement of Learning* – of caring more for words than for matter, more for syntactical pattern than for exact expression of nothing more or less than factual truth.

Expounding the method of Democritus, Bacon wrote in Aphorism 1. 51 of the *Novum Organum* that, rather than resolve nature into abstractions, like the endlessly disputing scholastic philosophers, his purpose was to dissect her into parts. The Latin version of the *Essays* he accordingly entitled *Interiora Rerum*, "the insides of things", and so might well have emulated Robert Burton, and called the third English version *The Anatomy of Wisdom* (sharing as he does, moreover, titles and topics not only with Montaigne but with Montaigne's friend and follower Pierre Charron, whose *De la sagesse* was translated in about 1608 as *Of Wisdom*).

But the essays are counsels more civil than moral, and far from being concerned predominantly with epistemology. They treat of religious truth, whose realm is distinguished in the "Prometheus" chapter of *The Wisdom of the Ancients* (also appended by Pitcher) from that of human sense and reason, but more substantially, as in the invocation of legal along with religious judgment in "Of Truth", of the dealings between men in society. It was William Harvey's opinion, according to John Aubrey, that Bacon wrote philosophy "like a Lord Chancellor" in the *Essays* we may see not only the prescriptive judge, but the legal mind concerned with the "better case", the more plausible, the more practical and effective, rather than the pure and simple truth. In *Of Truth*, the words *business, fortune, honour, greatness, power, riches*, as well as *religion, law, equity, justice*, are all more than platitudes about the

duty of a judge to suppress fraud ("Of Judicature") and the true religion built upon a rock while the rest are tossed upon the waves of time ("Of Vicissitude of Things"), his most telling observations about truth and truthfulness are made in such essays as "Of Simulation and Dissimulation" and "Of Suspicion", and in those parts of "Of Truth" concerning people's eagerness to be deceived – all three not published till 1625, the fruits of a lifetime's dealings in royal courts, law courts and the High Court of Parliament. "Of Simulation and Dissimulation" gives hard advice on the official art of being economical with the truth without creating a credibility gap – "what things are to be laid open, and what to be secreted, and what to be showed at half-lights, and to whom, and when", while maintaining an appearance of "openness and frankness of dealing, and a name of certainty and veracity", so that when dissimulation is thought necessary, the reputation of "good faith and clearness of dealing" will provide a cover. This leads to the cynical paradox, "Besides (to say truth) nakedness is uncomely as well in mind as body; . . . Therefore set it down that an *habit of secrecy* is both *politic and moral*." And when it comes to getting hold of truth which is the property of others, "it is a good shrewd proverb of the Spaniard, *Tell a lie and find a truth*". The only restraint on this last principle is the damage it may do to "one of the most principal instruments for action, which is trust and belief".

The words *know* and *true* are most frequently deployed in that masterly exposition of judicious distrust, "Of Suspicion". From these counsels the beginner may learn that as gravity is to the tightrope walker, so is the impermanence of secrets to permanent secretaries made to perform in public.

In "Of Cunning" Bacon is himself almost impenetrably discreet in not naming the subjects of his intriguing anecdotes – "I knew a Counsellor and Secretary . . .", "I knew two that were competitors for the Secretary's place . . .", and here Pitcher's notes fail us, while Michael Kiernan's full commentary in the Clarendon Press *Essays* comes into its own in affixing probable names to these paragons of statecraft (though he passes over in silence two others in the same essay). Likewise, though the Penguin finds room always to give details about classical persons named in the text, Kiernan – in the received mistranslation – or "truth's deep well" of Democritus) "are very close to scientific hypothesis, the faculty of theory which Bacon is often accused of having undervalued". On the debit side is the writer's occasional falling into the very trap he denounced in *The Advancement of Learning* – of caring more for words than for matter, more for syntactical pattern than for exact expression of nothing more or less than factual truth.

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Francis Bacon, *Last of the Tudors*). Another unquestioned "authority" is the Revd W. Beggley's *Is it Shakespeare?* (cited without the question-mark, perhaps to diminish his dubiety). They are reinforced with such argument as that Sir Nicholas Bacon could not have been the father because he was fat, gouty and short of breath – a rather virginal assumption that sexual intercourse requires heroic powers and health.

It is not just that "authorities" are unauthoritative: they are deployed misleadingly, as in "In the Dic. Nat. Biog. XVI, p. 114, it is stated that Lord Robert was secretly married to the Queen in the House of Lord Pembroke before a number of witnesses." In this micrographic age, even the common reader may easily find not only that Dodd has cited the wrong volume (characteristic inaccuracy), but, more damagingly, that the statement is not made, or even agreed with, by Leicester's biographer Sir Sidney Lee, merely said to have been "reported". Though costing less than twopence a page, Dodd's book is not worth even that, and its six hundred pages of half-truth, tendentious inference and unsupported assertion are not worth six minutes of anyone's time, which will be rewardingly spent, by contrast, with the modest Penguin of Pitcher, or the definitive Clarendon of Kiernan.

Enjoying the harvest

H. R. Woudhuysen

PAUL SALZMAN
English Prose Fiction 1558-1700: A critical history
391pp. Oxford University Press. Paperback, £12.50.
0198128738
STEPHEN S. HILLIARD
The Singularity of Thomas Nashe
260pp. University of Nebraska Press. £22.60.
08032 23269

In Samuel Holland's *Don Zara Del Fogo*, 1656, the eponymous hero arrives in a version of Marvell's paradise: "here Potatoes & ripe Grapes offered themselves to his lips, there Pomgranates and luscious Dates contended which first should salute his goodly-sid'd grinders". With another edition in the same year of publication and a third in 1660, Holland's comic anti-romance was quite successful in its time, but has, until the appearance of Paul Salzman's *English Prose Fiction 1558-1700*, been more or less forgotten. This paperback edition of Salzman's book will do much to stimulate interest in the rather neglected field of sixteenth and seventeenth-century fiction. It provides a useful and accurate starting-point for further research.

Salzman has read his way through vast amounts of arcadian, picaresque, realist and popular fictions, black letter, political, allegorical and French romances of all kinds, imaginary voyages, utopias, novellas, jest books, memoirs, rogue literature and Restoration novels. His appetite for these is astonishing: his interest rarely flags and he has a very sharp eye for illustrative quotations. Except for an unpleasing moment when he is discussing T. D.'s translation of Voiture's *Histoire d'Alcidalis et de Zeldie*, 1671, where he says that "Don Quixote is written at the interface of the imagination and reality", his own prose is free from modern critical jargon and easy to follow. Arranged in eighteen chapters with about sixty easily digestible subsections, the book shows a remarkable clarity of exposition. Works are never forced into categories and genres to which they do not properly belong. Gascoigne, Lyly, Sidney and Bunyan get chapters to themselves, but Salzman is willing to devote considerable space to works which are little known, but of more than usual interest. He discusses three of these at some length: Sir Percy Herbert's royalist romance, *The Prince Clarin*, 1661, the unfinished *Parthenissa* of Roger Boyle, first Earl of Orrery, published between 1651 and 1669, and the enormously popular *English Rogue* of which the first part by Richard Head appeared in 1665.

The important role of women in producing and consuming these fictions, especially in the seventeenth century, is kept in mind and Sal-

man makes some gestures towards discussing the wider market for them in a more general context. It would have been useful to have more on the profession of authorship, the role of publishing and the nature of literary patronage in this period. Throughout *English Prose Fiction*, Salzman's tone is sensible and moderate, neither making extravagant claims for unlikely books, nor failing to find anything of interest in works of no apparent merit.

Yet despite all this the book still has some weaknesses. Salzman is very good at describing what he has read by and about an author or a book, but he has very few critical ideas of his own about what he has devoted so much time and energy to. This is not such a pressing issue with the very minor and obscure works, which most readers will be encountering for the first time, but when he comes to Sidney or Bunyan, Salzman appears rather out of his depth and his book almost ceases to be a critical history and becomes an annotated bibliography. Similarly, by confining himself to prose alone, he does not give himself enough room to consider the influence on fiction writers of narrative technique and style as they developed in poetry and on the stage: Spenser, Shakespeare and Milton, for example, are largely ignored in Salzman's survey. No doubt reasons of space played a part in this decision. His version of literary history is self-consciously not evaluative, but descriptive, explanatory and categorical; it is a model of all of these, but it still lacks the critical and historical sharpness that a work of this kind needs if it is to be a literary history and not a reference work.

Some of the same criticisms can be made about Stephen S. Hilliard's amiable and straightforward book on Nashe. Hilliard never quite makes clear what he means by Nashe's "singularity" and in what sense, if any, he was more or less singular than any other Elizabethan author. He takes a conventional view of Nashe, which tends to ignore his manic energy, giving little sense of how engagingly odd he is. One of his themes is that of Nashe's relationship with his early patron Whitgift, who eventually signed the order banning the publication of his works. While exploring this rather tenuous connection he is quite willing to admit that the Archbishop may never even have seen *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, which was supposed to have been performed in his place at Croydon. Hilliard is on safer ground when he examines Nashe's response to the criticism of his work. *The Singularity of Thomas Nashe* adds little to our knowledge of this most bracing of Elizabethan authors, but serves as a useful and largely reliable introduction to his works. It offers general descriptions of his pamphlets and the times in which he wrote them, but never gets down to the serious business of looking at the structures within which he worked, and the words he used.

Beauclerk's bureaucracy

Frank Barlow

JUDITH A. GREEN
The Government of England under Henry I
303pp. Cambridge University Press. £27.50.
0521 332315

Although modern historians have deprived Henry I of his nickname "Beauclerk", they have transferred to him, from his grandson, Henry II, the honour of being the founder of the medieval English royal bureaucratic government. Two documents have ensured that his reign should be the centre round which all constitutional and institutional history of the Norman period revolves. The first is the Pipe Roll of his thirty-first year (1129-30), the earliest financial accounts of the annual Exchequer audit to have survived, and without sequel until the second year of Henry II (1155-6). The other is the *Constitutio Domus Regis*, the establishment of the royal household, drawn up, it seems, for the information of his successor, the unfortunate Stephen.

The wave of revaluation was inaugurated in 1962 by R. W. Southern in his celebrated Raleigh Lecture, "The place of Henry I in English History", followed in 1963 by H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, in their explosive *The Governance of Medieval England*. And while we await C. Warren Hollister's full-scale biography, which has been on the stocks since the 1960s, the periodical literature grows apace, fed largely by Hollister himself. Judith Green, who has already published four useful articles on administrative and financial matters, now pulls them together and rounds them off. Her monograph, developed ultimately from a doctoral thesis, is, however, more restricted than the title might suggest. "Govern-

ment" here means "royal government". Vast areas of government, particularly baronial and ecclesiastical, which, when royal government almost collapsed under Stephen, saved the country from anarchy, are completely ignored. The book remains an expanded commentary on the Pipe Roll of Michaelmas 1130.

Henry was in many ways an admirable man and king. A bold adventurer who made his own fortune against the odds, a brave leader who did not shrink pitched battles, a fine soldier and a clever manipulator of men and institutions, he gave England thirty-three years of peace in which the Church flourished as seldom before and the towns and trade recovered from the shock of the Norman Conquest. Especially, he transmuted the harsh and exploitative financial and judicial expedients of an occupying power

into the instruments of a legitimate authority. Yet most historians have felt ill at ease with him. The least pleasant of the Norman kings, cruel, avaricious, gluttonous, a cold lecher, soured by the loss of his only legitimate son and much of the *jeunesse dorée* in the wreck of the White Ship in 1120, and tormented by nightmares as his troubles increased, he can be regarded as ultimately a complete failure, with Stephen's reign his epitaph. That his diplomatic contrivances led to the "Angelic Empire" of his grandson and great-grandsons was not necessarily because of his wisdom and piety.

Henry II always appealed on matters English to the customs of his grandfather, and the pattern of government which Henry I created does indeed deserve the closest scrutiny.



A mercenary delousing a fellow warrior, painted by an unknown artist in 1517 for the Rehlinger family chapel in the Augsburg Dominican church, and now in the Staatsgalerie, Augsburg. It is reproduced here from Die Stadt im Späten Mittelalter by Hartmut Boockmann (357pp. Munich: C. H. Beck. DM98. 3 406 31565 8).

Green knows the sources and literature inside out and is blessed with the ability to write clearly and judiciously on the several topics she has chosen. Her main offering—more than half the book—is a study of the king's servants, particularly the sheriffs, and she provides a most useful bibliographical appendix on all *ministri* who occur in the Pipe Roll of 1130. This section is prefaced by relatively short chapters on the royal entourage, Bishop Roger of Salisbury and the Exchequer, finance, justice and local (royal) government.

Originality is impossible in a field in which so many labour, and this study does not greatly alter, in whole or in part, the currently accepted view of the reign. There is, though, much minor rectification and some useful reviews of controversial matters. Green is one of those who think that J. H. LePatourel went too far in trying to synthesize a "Cross-Channel kingdom", ruled by a "king-dux", out of two entities which remained stubbornly distinct. She does not like Southern's suggestion that Henry encouraged the "rise of the gentry". Although an evolutionist, and rejecting Richardson and Sayles's view that the Exchequer and with it the Justiciarships of England and Normandy were created as a single measure, she seems occasionally to be unduly reluctant to allow precedents (a fourteenth-century cartulary copy of an account of a case in 1096, when it contains obviously authentic detail, is not to be rejected simply because the date of transmission). Rufus and Raoul Flambard are clearly in many things forefathers of Henry and Roger of Salisbury.

All the same, if we judge this monograph on its own terms there is not much to criticize. The scholarship is sound, the tone good-mannered and the final summing-up a model of clarity and good sense.

Seeing off the sinner

John Bossy

ELISABETH VODOLA
Excommunication in the Middle Ages
281pp. University of California Press. £29.95.
0520 049993

One of Hitler's gifts to English-speaking history has been a knowledge of the canon law, imported by the late Walter Ullmann to Cambridge and by Stephan Kuttner to California. Some may think California a strange place to be studying the medieval Church's sanction of social exclusion against moral transgressors, but this is a very handy little book, which will tell you all you want to know about the theory of the subject from the early Church to Luther. It will not tell you so much about the practice: the most substantial contribution on that side still seems to be Lucien Febvre's piece on excommunication for debt in the *Franchie-Comté*. But there is plenty in the theory to keep the mind occupied.

The term "excommunication" has always had an alarming and sinister sound, as if its object might fall down dead as soon as the sentence was pronounced; this is not surprising, since one of its sources is the curse or anathema, which might be hoped to produce that effect. The gentler source was the penitential practice of the early Church, in which the sinner was excluded from the Eucharist and the society of other Christians until he reformed. In its medieval form excommunication was a mixture of both: on the whole the relatively benevolent "penitential aspect" prevailed, but something fiercer and less manageable continued to surface in the idea that excommunication was contagious to all who came into contact with the excommunicate, and that it consigned the excommunicate to damnation. Both Aquinas and Luther explained that the second point was untrue, and various popes tried to do something about the first. They gave the impression of trying to teach polite behaviour to a monster.

The dynamite in excommunication was the ceremonial exclusion from human or Christian relationships, which appealed to the vindictiveness never far from the surface of medieval Christendom. As the practice of public pen-

ance decayed, excommunication ceased to produce such melodramatic effects as the appearance of the Emperor Henry IV in the snow at Canossa; on the other hand, like other features of medieval Christendom, it became democratized in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Readily available from the courts Christian for technical infringements of their jurisdiction, it was an effective weapon for harassing your neighbours. The Council of Trent did well to reform it, though there was probably some connection between its willingness to do this and its difficulties in envisaging the Church as a genuine society. This difficulty was, at any rate, the issue in the acrimonious and extremely interesting dispute in the thirteenth century between the canonist Pope Innocent IV, who wanted to reform excommunication by restricting its consequences, and the even more distinguished canonist Hostiensis, who did not. Some of Hostiensis's remarks, such as that one of the Pope's more important decisions had come "off the top of his head", will help to restore faith in the fundamental soundness of medieval Christendom. (So will the recommendation of Johannes Teutonicus on the issue of cutting off relations with one's excommunicate friends: Do not do this in a hurry if it is extremely inconvenient.)

The only unsatisfactory passage in Elisabeth Vodola's most welcome book is a rare theoretical comment at the beginning of Chapter Four. She says that "excommunication's legal effects were the medieval expression of a much broader historical phenomenon, derived from ancient law and passed on to modern societies, the hierarchical organizing of social groups by differing degrees of legal status. Though sometimes punitive, the reduction or withdrawal of legal rights was principally intended to order society according to social and moral values." This piece of deference to sociology sticks out like a quotation from Marx in a textbook of Soviet biology. It does not seem at all supported by what she has afterwards to say about excommunication inhibiting people's right to sue or otherwise act at law; and what "ordering society according to social values" is, Heaven knows. If historians of canon law cannot see that the concept "society", as here understood, is one that they absolutely do not need, perhaps they should not have gone to California after all.

Amicability by decree

David Starkey

G. W. BERNARD
War, Taxation and Rebellion
208pp. Brighton: Harvester. £25.
07108 11268

Time, the chief revisionist, has cut the Amicable Grant of 1525 down to size. Described in 1929 as "perhaps the most violent financial exaction in English history", in 1987 its top-rate tax band for the laity of 16.6 per cent seems modestly itself. But in his new study G. W. Bernard seeks to take the process of revision a stage further. Events, he argues, were more complicated than has been supposed; motives, however, were simpler.

On the first point he carries conviction. The Grant was imposed to take advantage of the unique opportunity offered by the defeat and capture at Pavla of Francis I of France by the forces of England's ally, Charles V. But not only was England's commitment to war uncertain; the government also shifted ground on the Grant itself. It began as a flat-rate levy. By April 25, resistance, particularly in London, changed it into a negotiable benevolence. The concession into open rebellion in East Anglia. In early May, the government accepted the inevitable and the whole affair was abandoned with not one penny paid.

But what of the motives of the actors? Here modern historians have shown a penchant for what Dr Bernard calls "devious" explanations. Some have Wolsey—supposedly pacifist; pro-French—rejoice at the failure of the Grant because it made war impossible. Others, less absurdly, have suggested that leading commissioners like Warham and Norfolk connived at resistance or even encouraged it out of hatred for Wolsey. Bernard is surely right to deny this. But it does not follow, as he seems to think, that all was sweetness and light within the élite. Warham and Norfolk banded protest more gently than they themselves were to do later in Kent in 1528-9 and in the North in 1537. While Warham, in the very letter that Bernard cites at length to prove his "devious" self, obliged to insist that "I would I be thus to write... if

it were not my true and faithful intent". Obviously Wolsey had his doubts, even if Bernard does not.

But one historian emerges unscathed from Bernard's revisionism: the contemporary chronicler, Edward Hall. Bernard challenges Hall on only one point of fact—the date of the revocation of the Grant—and it is clear that Bernard who has misread, not Hall who has erred. This matters because Hall's interpretation is diametrically opposed to Bernard's. Bernard sees the rejection of the Grant as a result of poverty, or rather (since, as he rather sheepishly concedes, the mid-1520s were years of prosperity) inability to pay following the unusually heavy burden of taxation since 1522. Hall, on the other hand, emphasizes constitutional objections. And, despite Bernard's denials, with good evidence. Hall says that while the clergy acknowledged that they were obliged to pay anything granted in convocation, they denied they were similarly bound by a royal commission; Warham's report confirms this to the letter. Again Warham is our witness that in Kent at least the laity, far from opposing the royal claim of "necessity", only by a plea of "poverty", moved immediately to challenge the rationality of the king's foreign policy.

True, the non-parliamentary nature of the Grant, which figures so largely in Hall, is not mentioned by the other (very scanty) sources. But Parliament is not the only locus of the constitution. Bernard passes over in silence the reminder from Norfolk and Suffolk, who had their hands full with the near-rebellion in East Anglia, that "we never saw the time so needful for the king's Highness to call his council unto him". Yet seven months later, in January 1526, the Eltham Ordinances made the first attempt at setting up a proto-privy council. And three years later still, on Wolsey's overthrow by the two dukes, the conciliar scheme was put into practice.

Bernard would no doubt reject such deductions as "presumptuous". Yet his brand of revisionism hardly presents a plausible alternative. Englishmen, it seems, were happy to part with their property to the Crown to the limit of indigence; councillors, it appears, worked harmoniously and without recommitment on a policy that was both "ambitious and ineffective". It will not take time, I think, to reveal the insufficiencies of this sort of history.

Among the journals

Byzantine and Greek Studies

Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies
Volume 9, 1984/5 and Volume 10, 1986
£12 per year. Centre for Byzantine Studies and
Modern Greek, University of Birmingham,
PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT.

Academic journals are not often the subject of take-over bids but *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* changed editors as the result of just such a bid. How has it fared, now that it has been "radicalized" and "rejuvenated", as two of the articles in the first issue to appear under the new dispensation somewhat prematurely (if not indeed presumptuously) proclaim?

If the old *BMGS* was a monument to bourgeois empiricism, contributors to the new have hastened to make up for lost time by injecting a heavy dose of that theory which, so we are told, "is always [sic] a sign of a (healthy) crisis threatening the foundations of orthodoxy". The editor, for instance, in his survey of Byzantine history-writing and contemporary debates (volume Nine), contrives to make virtually no mention of either Byzantium or its historians. He does, however, manage to alert us to the "masculine pride" and "academic careerism" of "a male dominated scholarly world". With only five women out of some twenty-three contributors to volumes Nine and Ten there is clearly still scope for some affirmative action.

It seems odd that those so critical of the supposed elitism of traditional scholarship should choose to frame their criticisms in an arcane private language of their own. Whatever the faults of the old *BMGS* (and I write as a former member of its editorial board) it was always at least intelligible. It would none the less be misleading to give the impression that *BMGS* is now wholly given over to the discussion of the "Sapir-Whorf hypothesis" or to T. S. Kuhn's theory of paradigms. Margaret Alexiou's fascinating reappraisal of the twelfth-century Prodicus poems (volume Ten) and Catia Galatariotou's study of holy women and witches in Byzantium (volume Nine) afford striking confirmation that it is not inherently necessary to throw out the empirical baby with the conceptual bathwater. In more traditional vein, David Holton affords a valuable analysis of the political vocabulary of the *paradiaphylax* General Makrydakis, and there is much else of substance interspersed among the "politically aware Greek criticism".

For all the theoretical pyrotechnics in these two issues, however, there is no indication that a solution has been found to the basic problem besetting the old *BMGS*. It still remains a hodgepodge of articles on vastly disparate themes and chronological periods. Is anyone with an interest in the *Comes Horreorum* likely to be at all concerned with the role of the European Community in Greek politics, or vice versa? Is there, indeed, enough good material to support two scholarly journals in the field, *BMGS* and the *Journal of Modern Greek Studies*, which emerged from the schism between the British and American editorial boards of the old *BMGS*? Might there not be a case for "de-ghettoizing" this particular field of study and thus avoiding a situation where a small group of contributors write over and over again for the same journal? On the other hand, Vasilis Lambropoulos tells us that if we do not want to isolate Modern Greek studies then "we must soon face the combined tasks of epistemological reflexivity, historical awareness and political responsibility". If this really is the case then it might be preferable for them not merely to be isolated but to be quarantined.

Richard Clogg

Labour History

International Labor and Working-Class History
No 29, Spring, and No 30, Fall, 1986.
£26 per year. University of Illinois Press. 54 E. Gregory Dr. Champaign, Illinois 61820.

"Labour and working-class history" is a subject studied differently in different places. In Europe, the approach has been shaped by strong Marxist and revolutionary traditions; in Britain the chief influence has been the unions linked to the Labour Party. In the United States, despite firm foundations laid by John R. Commons and the Wisconsin School (indeed, some would argue because of them), labour history became at times little more than a branch of management studies.

Since the 1960s, however, American labour history has emerged as a fully fledged subject on its own. One of the major steps along the way was the founding in the 1970s by Robert F. Wheeler of the *Journal of International Labor and Working-Class History*. Pioneers can still recall the old foolscap format and typewriter-like printing which made *ILWCH* seem like the *samizdat* of labour history. Wheeler died tragically young, but is remembered on the mast-

head of the journal, which now appears in more conventional shape and size. The current editor is David Montgomery of Yale University (this year's Visiting Harmsworth Professor at Oxford), who with such figures as David Brody and Melvyn Dubofsky has played a central role in the revival of labour studies in the United States.

The original purpose of the journal was to create links between scholars in every country studying labour history. This is still maintained. The latest volume, for example, a special issue on the Popular Front, has contributions on the situation in America, Britain, France and Spain. However, it has to be pointed out that all the articles are by Americans, with "foreigners" only getting a look-in with book reviews.

One of the most interesting of these reviews is by Hywel Francis of a book by another Welshman, D. Hywel Davies, on Saunders Lewis and the Welsh Nationalist Party between 1925 and 1945. Francis notes that its leaders for the most part sympathized, not with the Popular Front, but with Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany and Franco's Spain even at the expense of support for Czechs, Catalans and Basques. The whole number is introduced by a thoughtful editorial asking why the Popular Front, which flourished only briefly and fairly ineffectively in the 1930s, should still haunt us fifty years later.

The spring 1986 number of *ILWCH* celebrated another anniversary: the centenary of the Haymarket Incident. This episode was crucial in launching May Day, the American labour movement and, as John Laslett argues in another valuable contribution, the labour upsurge in Britain which led to the "new unionism" of the late 1880s. Again, though the article deals with subjects from France, Germany and Europe in general as well as Chicago, the contributors are mainly Americans.

The journal carries an invaluable full listing of current research in the field. In keeping with modern trends in scholarship, *ILWCH* examines the broader topic of working-class social history, not just the trade unions and political parties which preoccupied earlier writers. Sometimes whole numbers are largely given over to debate and controversy among historians. This can, of course, result in an arid academicism, but can also spark illuminating debate. All in all, no comparable journal in the field of labour history embraces such a wide area of study.

Patrick Renshaw

Slavonic Studies

The South Slav Journal
Volume 9, No. 3-4; autumn-winter 1986
£10 per year. 7 Chesterford Gardens, London NW3 7DD.

An indulgently hospitable hybrid, the *South Slav Journal* has for nine years of occasionally irregular publication opened its columns to a macédoine of exiles, academics, publicists and dissidents whose only common denominator is an interest in south-eastern Europe in general and Yugoslavia in particular. Irreconcilable anti-communists of dubiously democratic pedigree rub shoulders with liberal-minded pluralists keen to support similar trends in Yugoslavia; young lecturers in search of a free book for review or an easy citation appear alongside establishment figures still enamoured of the heroic phase of Yugoslav socialism.

The current number (hot off the offset litho despite its cover date) is characteristically eclectic in content and uneven in quality. There are historical features both complete and "to be continued" (an annoying practice in what has become a semi-annual). Of the former, what looks a promising study of the wartime Croatian state's perverse ideology of "aryanism" turns out to be a superficial gloss; while a piece on Garibaldi's grandsons' scheme to raise a red shirt band on the Salonika front in 1915 degenerates into an embarrassing exercise in Italian self-congratulation.

An alarmist analysis of Yugoslavia's increasing economic dependence on the Soviet Union by Marko Milivojević combines mixed and menacing metaphor (putting one's "head in the lion's mouth" is to be avoided "like the plague") with fierce cold war, but is none the less of interest. A meditation on the national question by Aleksa Dijas concludes that only democratic reform can ensure the future of the vast majority of Yugoslavs condemned by history and geography to live together. As a basic primer on Yugoslavia's multinational essence this short and lucid article deserves the widest possible readership.

There are also documents old and new, including last October's stirring appeal to the Federal Assembly by the Belgrade-based Committee for the Defence of Freedom of Thought and Expression for the establishment of true democracy and the rule of law. A country which used to be notable for its lack of

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